

**Missouri Combined State Plan
Modification
PY 2024-PY 2027
under the
Workforce Innovation and
Opportunity Act**

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OVERVIEW

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

Options for Submitting a State Plan

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan— a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA), ○ the Dislocated Worker program (Title I), ○ the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan

partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

How State Plan Requirements Are Organized.

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State’s economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State’s workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State’s efforts to support the State’s strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals,

implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:

- State Strategy Implementation,
- State Operating Systems and Policies,
- Assurances,
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, *Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements*. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.^[2] States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations. Use of links to external websites and documents is permitted within the State Plan narrative submission, if such links remain active and adhere to Section 508 accessibility requirements.

Paperwork Reduction Act: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE and EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(a) **Unified or Combined State Plan.** Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

- ☐ **Unified State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.
- ✓ **Combined State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below. Indicate which Combined State Plan partner program(s) the State is electing to include in the plan.
- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
No
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
Yes
 - Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
Yes
 - Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
No
 - Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
No
 - Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
Yes
 - Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
No
 - Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

No

- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

No

- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

Yes

- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program^[3] (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

No

(b) **Plan Introduction or Executive Summary.** The Unified or Combined State Plan may include an introduction or executive summary. This element is optional.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. Where requirements identify the term "populations", these must include individuals with barriers to employment as defined at WIOA Section 3. This includes displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. Additional populations include veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

^[1] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

^[2] Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

^[3] The Reentry Employment Opportunities program (REO), formerly the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (RExO), is referred to by its original name (RExO) in this document. This name change is a recent decision that was not incorporated into WIOA.

a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

A. Economic Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include—

i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

ii. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

iii. Employers' Employment Needs

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

Missouri is strategically located in the Midwest and borders eight states. With a population of over 6 million, it also houses over 245,600 employers. The largest employers are concentrated in the health care, retail trade, manufacturing, accommodation and food services, and educational services industries.

In order to serve Missouri citizens, the Missouri Public Workforce System (MPWS) must understand the drivers behind its economy and workforce. Working Missourians define the economy by providing the goods and services to support the citizens and provide the necessary health, education, and support services to help communities thrive. Understanding the economic conditions and demographics of the state allows the MPWS to identify trends and address gaps which impact both employers and jobseekers.

Gross Domestic Product

The broadest measure of economic activity is the gross domestic product (GDP). Gross Domestic Product by State (GSP) measures the value-added from industries in that state. According to estimates from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2024, Missouri ranked 21st nationally in GSP at \$356.65 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars, a 2.3 percent increase from 2023 to 2024. Nationally, inflation-adjusted GDP increased 2.8 percent over the same period to \$23.305 trillion.

Missouri's private sector improved 2.2 percent from the previous year and contributed over \$318.23 billion to Missouri's real GSP in 2024 whereas Government increased by 3.5 percent and contributed \$38.52 billion.

Missouri's GDP by industry measures the state's output or size of the state's economy by industry. Industry-level analysis helps to show which industries make the largest contribution to the state's economy. The percent change shows either an increase or decline in the contribution between the most current two years of data. This data lags by one calendar year.

In 2024, among private sector industries, *Real Estate, Rental and Leasing* represented the largest share of GSP in the state at 12.6 percent. *Manufacturing* (11.9 percent) and *Health Care and Social Assistance* (9.5 percent) were other top contributing industries to Missouri's GSP.

Several industry sectors experienced a positive GDP growth in the 10-year period from 2014 to 2024. The greatest compound annual growth rate in the past 10 years was in the *Professional and business services* industry with a 3.6 percent compound annual growth rate. Other 10-year top trends included a compound annual growth rate in *Information* at 3.5 percent; *Retail trade* at 3.5 percent; *Educational services, health care, and social assistance* at 2.7 percent; and *Construction* at 2.7 percent.

In the past year, most industry sectors experienced a positive growth except *Transportation and warehousing* and *Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting*. The *Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction* industry had the largest yearly growth, at 24.2 percent. *Retail trade* at 9.8 percent; *Construction* at 5.9 percent; *Educational services, health care, and social assistance* at 4.3 percent; and *Manufacturing* at 2.9 percent had the next largest positive growth. The largest negative yearly growth was in *Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting* at -23.8 percent.

Industry Concentration

Industry concentration analysis, using location quotients (LQ), helps identify the industries that are more specialized in an area. Businesses that are more specialized due to exporting goods and services, or because they draw customers in from outside the state, are important sources of new income.

A high LQ for an industry indicates that the industry is more specialized, and employment is more concentrated for that industry in the state, as compared to the United States as a whole. This could be because that industry is more export oriented, or it is drawing customers into the state.

All industries can be grouped into one of two domains: Goods-Producing and Service-Providing. Goods-Producing industries represent 18 percent of Missouri's employment, while Service-Providing industries represent 82 percent. This is very similar to the makeup of the nation's employment, as Missouri's Goods-Producing has an LQ of 1.1 and Service-Providing industry has an LQ of 0.98.

Overall, the Manufacturing sector in Missouri has an LQ of 1.23, indicating the industry is more concentrated in the state than in the U.S. At the three-digit NAICS industry level, Manufacturing represents more than half of the top 10 most concentrated industries in Missouri. The other half of the top 10 industries are Service-Providing, with *Computing infrastructure providers, data processing, web hosting, and related services* having the highest LQ.

Top Ten Industry Concentrations						
NAICS	Industry	Employment LQ	Establishments	Average Annual Employment	Average Annual Wage	Average Annual Employment Growth
518	Computing infrastructure providers, data processing, web hosting, and related services	1.61	1,184	14,589	\$145,480	-0.4%
457	Gasoline stations and fuel dealers	1.57	2,761	30,688	\$31,084	-0.3%
335	Electrical equipment, appliance, and component manufacturing	1.5	269	11,824	\$72,858	-0.6%
336	Transportation equipment manufacturing	1.5	426	49,591	\$97,566	1.1%
484	Truck transportation	1.4	3,881	39,642	\$63,059	-3.6%
333	Machinery manufacturing	1.38	832	28,603	\$69,810	-0.3%
323	Printing and related support activities	1.37	631	9,149	\$53,816	-6.2%
325	Chemical manufacturing	1.36	678	22,834	\$86,435	1.4%
311	Food manufacturing	1.33	823	43,964	\$64,622	-1.3%
622	Hospitals	1.29	398	131,944	\$80,718	1.3%

Data includes industry with employment greater than 5,000

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2024 Annual Averages, All establishment sizes, Private, NAICS Sub-Sectors, Missouri

Regional Economies

Missouri has a diverse economy that varies by geography, natural resources, and population. The following section analyzes the various regional economies that contribute to Missouri's economy. The state is divided into nine regions. These regions were developed using the Workforce Development Areas created by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and continued with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

Central Region

The Central Region is comprised of 19 counties in the center of Missouri. This region is home to several cities including Columbia, Mexico, Rolla, Camdenton, Lebanon, and the state capital, Jefferson City.

The Central Region workforce had more than 323,300 employees in 2024, making up 10.7 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, about 50.3 percent of the workforce was female and 49.7 percent was male, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the workforce. The regional average unemployment rate in 2024 was 3.5 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

Health Care and Social Assistance was the largest industry sector in the Central Region, with over 47,000 jobs in 2024. The industry added 4,933 jobs at a compound annual growth rate of 2.2 percent since 2020. The *Retail Trade* industry continues to be one of the largest employing industries in the region with over 34,000 jobs in 2024, a gain of over 2,800 jobs since 2020.

Educational Services is another large industry with over 35,400 jobs in 2024, an increase of over 5,900 jobs since 2020. *Accommodation and Food Services* gained over 5,000 jobs at a compound annual rate of 4.1 percent from 2020 to 2024, and in the same period *Manufacturing* added 816 jobs at a rate of 0.6 percent.

The Central Region has higher concentrations in *Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers; Credit Intermediation and Related Activities; Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, Book, and*

Miscellaneous Retailers; General Merchandise Retailers; and Building Material and Garden Equipment and Suppliers.

Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the Central Region between 2022-2032 will be in *Educational Services; Food Services and Drinking Places; Administrative and Support Services; Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals; Management of Companies and Enterprises; and Ambulatory Health Care Services.*

Kansas City Region

The Kansas City Region is comprised of five counties in the west central part of Missouri. The region is home to several cities including Kansas City and Independence.

The Kansas City Region workforce had over 633,300 employees, making up 21.0 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, 50.5 percent of the workforce was male and 49.5 percent was female, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the workforce. The regional average unemployment rate in 2024 was 3.6 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

The *Health Care and Social Assistance* industry continued to have the highest employment in the Kansas City region, with nearly 88,000 jobs in 2024, a gain of over 5,600 jobs from 2020 to 2024, an increase of 1.3 percent compounded annually. *Retail Trade* was the second largest industry and gained over 5,300 jobs at a compound annual growth rate of 1.7 percent from 2020 to 2024.

The *Accommodation and Food Services* industry is the third largest employing industry in 2024 and added the most jobs, with a gain of 12,544 jobs since 2020. *Manufacturing* (7,839 jobs), *Transportation and Warehousing* (5,764 jobs), and *Health Care and Social Assistance* (5,611) also had large job gains. *Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services* and *Educational Services* are also among the largest industries in the region. *Management of Companies and Enterprises* lost 1,333 jobs at a compound annual rate of -2.6 percent from 2020 to 2024. *Public Administration; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction* were the other industry sectors that decreased in employment compared to 2020.

The Kansas City Region has higher concentrations in *Transportation Equipment Manufacturing; Paper Manufacturing; Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries; Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing; and Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions.*

Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the Kansas City Region between 2022-2032 will be in *Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Hospitals; Total Federal Government Employment; Ambulatory Health Care Services; and Food and Beverage Retailers.*

North Region

The North Region is comprised of 34 counties. This region is home to several cities including Kirksville, Hannibal, Moberly, Warrenton, St. Joseph, Chillicothe, Trenton, and Maryville.

The North Region workforce had over 239,700 employees in 2024, making up 7.9 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, 49.5 percent of the workforce was female and 50.5 percent was male, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the workforce. The regional average unemployment rate in 2024 was 3.6 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

Health Care and Social Assistance and *Manufacturing* were the largest industries in the region with employment of over 29,200 and 29,100 respectively in 2024. *Retail Trade* and *Educational Services* were the next largest industries in the region, employing over 20,000 and 18,200 respectively in 2024.

Health Care and Social Assistance was also the largest growing industry with a gain of 2,466 jobs from 2020 to 2024, resulting in a compound annual growth rate of 1.8 percent. *Accommodation and Food Services* gained 1,631 jobs from 2020 to 2024, with compound annual growth rates of 2.8 percent.

Public Administration; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Transportation and Warehousing; Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Finance and Insurance; and Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction were the industry sectors that decreased in employment compared to 2020.

The North Region has higher concentrations in *Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers; Food Manufacturing; and Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing*.

Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the North Region between 2022-2032 will be in *Social Assistance; Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing; Administrative and Support Services; Warehousing and Storage; and Crop Production*.

Ozark Region

The Ozark Region is comprised of seven counties in the southwest quadrant of Missouri. This region is home to several cities including Springfield, Branson, Nixa, and Marshfield.

The Ozark Region workforce had more than 274,400 employees, making up 9.1 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, 49.7 percent of the workforce was female and 50.3 percent was male, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the workforce. The regional average unemployment rate for 2024 was 3.6 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest employing industry in the Ozark Region, showing consistent growth over the years. Totaling more than 47,300 jobs in 2024, the industry added 4,933 jobs at a compound annual growth rate of 2.2 percent since 2020. The *Educational Services* industry has the second largest employment, employing more than 35,400. The industry gained over 5,900 jobs at a compound annual growth rate of 3.7 percent from 2000 to 2024. The *Retail Trade* industry also continues to be one of the largest employing industries in the region with over 34,000 jobs in 2024, a gain of over 2,870 jobs since 2020.

The *Manufacturing* industry also added jobs, with a gain of over 800 jobs since 2020. *Accommodation and Food Services, Manufacturing, and Public Administration* were also among the largest industries in the region. *Management of Companies and Enterprises* and *Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction* decreased in employment compared to 2020.

The Ozark Region has higher concentrations in *Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation; Truck Transportation; Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions; Accommodation; and Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries*.

Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the Ozark Region from 2022-2032 will be in the *Educational Services; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Hospitals; Administrative and Support Services; and Management of Companies and Enterprises*.

South Central Region

The South Central Region is comprised of 12 counties in the center of the southern portion of Missouri. The region is home to several cities including West Plains and Poplar Bluff.

The South Central Region workforce had more than 75,300 employees in 2024, making up 2.5 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, 53.1 percent of the workforce was female and 46.9 percent was male, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the workforce. The regional average unemployment rate in 2024 was 4.6 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest employing industries in the region with over 12,800 jobs in 2024. Since 2020, the industry has increased by 660 jobs and a 1.1 percent compound annual growth rate. *Manufacturing* is the second largest industry in the area with over 8,100 jobs. It gained 341 jobs since 2020. The *Accommodation and Food Services, Retail Trade, and Educational Services* industries also gained 968, 797 and 543 jobs, respectively, since 2020.

Wholesale Trade (-124) and *Management of Companies and Enterprises* (-65) were among the industry sectors that decreased in employment compared to 2020.

The South Central Region has higher concentrations in *Wood Product Manufacturing, Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers, Machinery Manufacturing, and Social Assistance*.

Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the South Central Region from 2022-2032 will be in the *Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Social Assistance; General Merchandise Retailers; Machinery Manufacturing; and Total Federal Government Employment*.

Southeast Region

The Southeast Region is comprised of 13 counties in the southeast portion of Missouri. The region is home to several cities including Cape Girardeau, Sikeston, Caruthersville, and Park Hills.

The Southeast Region workforce had more than 158,100 employees in 2024, making up 5.2 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, 51.7 percent of the workforce was female and 48.3 percent was male, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the

workforce. The regional average unemployment rate in 2024 was 4.1 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

Health Care and Social Assistance was the largest employing industry in the region in 2024 with employment totaling nearly 32,000. Employment in the industry increased by 1,635 when compared to 2020. *Retail Trade* was the second largest industry, followed by *Manufacturing* and *Educational Services*.

The *Manufacturing; Public Administration; Information; Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction; and Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services* industry sectors decreased in employment between 2020 and 2024 in the Southeast Region.

The Southeast Region had higher concentrations in *Mining (except Oil and Gas); Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers; Crop Production; Social Assistance; Wood Product Manufacturing; Nursing and Residential Care Facilities; and Truck Transportation*.

Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the Southeast Region from 2022-2032 will be in the *Hospitals; Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing; Management of Companies and Enterprises; General Merchandise Retailers; and Construction of Buildings*.

Southwest Region

The Southwest Region is comprised of seven counties in the southwest corner of Missouri. This region is home to several cities including Joplin, Neosho, and Monett.

The Southwest Region workforce had more than 132,800 employees in 2024, making up 4.4 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, 46.5 percent of the workforce was female and 53.5 percent was male, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the workforce. The regional average unemployment rate in 2024 was 3.8 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

Manufacturing was the largest employing industry in the region in 2024 with almost 22,400 jobs. *Health Care and Social Assistance* was the second largest industry in the region with over 16,300 jobs. *Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services* was the fastest growing industry from 2020 to 2024, increasing by a compound annualized growth rate of 8.3 percent. *Transportation and Warehousing* gained 2,118 jobs at a compound annual growth rate of 6.5 percent from 2020 to 2024.

Manufacturing declined by 1,503 in employment from 2020 to 2024. Other industry sectors in the Southwest Region that decreased in employment between 2020 and 2024 were *Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services; Management of Companies and Enterprises; Health Care and Social Assistance; Finance and Insurance; and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing*.

The Southwest Region had higher concentrations in *Food Manufacturing; Animal Production and Aquaculture; Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing; Truck Transportation; Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing; and Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers*.

Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the Southwest Region from 2022-2032 will be in *Hospitals; Food Manufacturing; Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Paper Manufacturing*.

St. Louis Region

The St. Louis Region is comprised of five counties and is located in the east central part of Missouri. The region is home to several cities, including Arnold, Washington, St. Charles, St. Peters, Florissant, O'Fallon, Chesterfield, and the City of St. Louis.

The St. Louis Region workforce had more than 1,056,400 employees in 2024, making up 35 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, 50.4 percent of the workforce was female and 49.6 percent was male, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the workforce. The regional average unemployment rate in 2024 was 3.5 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

Health Care and Social Assistance was the largest employing industry in the St. Louis Region in 2024. The industry's employment of over 194,600 is nearly double that of the next largest industry. *Retail Trade* was the second largest industry, with employment of 106,346.

The industry sectors with the largest increase in employment were *Accommodation and Food Services* and *Health Care and Social Assistance*, with an increase of over 18,500 and 17,100 jobs, respectively. *Manufacturing* grew at a compound annualized rate of 0.9 percent.

Management of Companies and Enterprises was the only one sector in the St. Louis Region that declined in employment between 2020 and 2024.

The St. Louis Region has higher concentrations in *Management of Companies and Enterprises, Chemical Manufacturing, Hospitals, Machinery Manufacturing, Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing, and Printing and Related Support Activities*.

Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the St. Louis Region from 2022-2032 will be in the *Hospitals; Ambulatory Health Care Services; Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries; Warehousing and Storage; and Food Services and Drinking Places*.

West Central Region

The West Central Region is comprised of 13 counties in the west central part of Missouri. This region is home to cities including Warrensburg, Sedalia, Lexington, Clinton, and Nevada.

The West Central Region workforce has more than 123,200 employees in 2024, making up 4.1 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, 51.0 percent of the workforce was female and 49.0 percent was male, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the workforce. The regional average unemployment rate for 2024 was 3.8 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

The *Health Care and Social Assistance* industry is the largest employing industry in the region with over 16,700 jobs. *Manufacturing, Educational Services, and Retail Trade* are the next largest industries in the area, each with employment over 10,000 in 2024.

All industry sectors in West Central Region had employment gains from 2020 to 2024. *Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation* was the fastest growing industry in the region from 2020 to 2024, increasing by a compound annual growth rate of 8 percent.

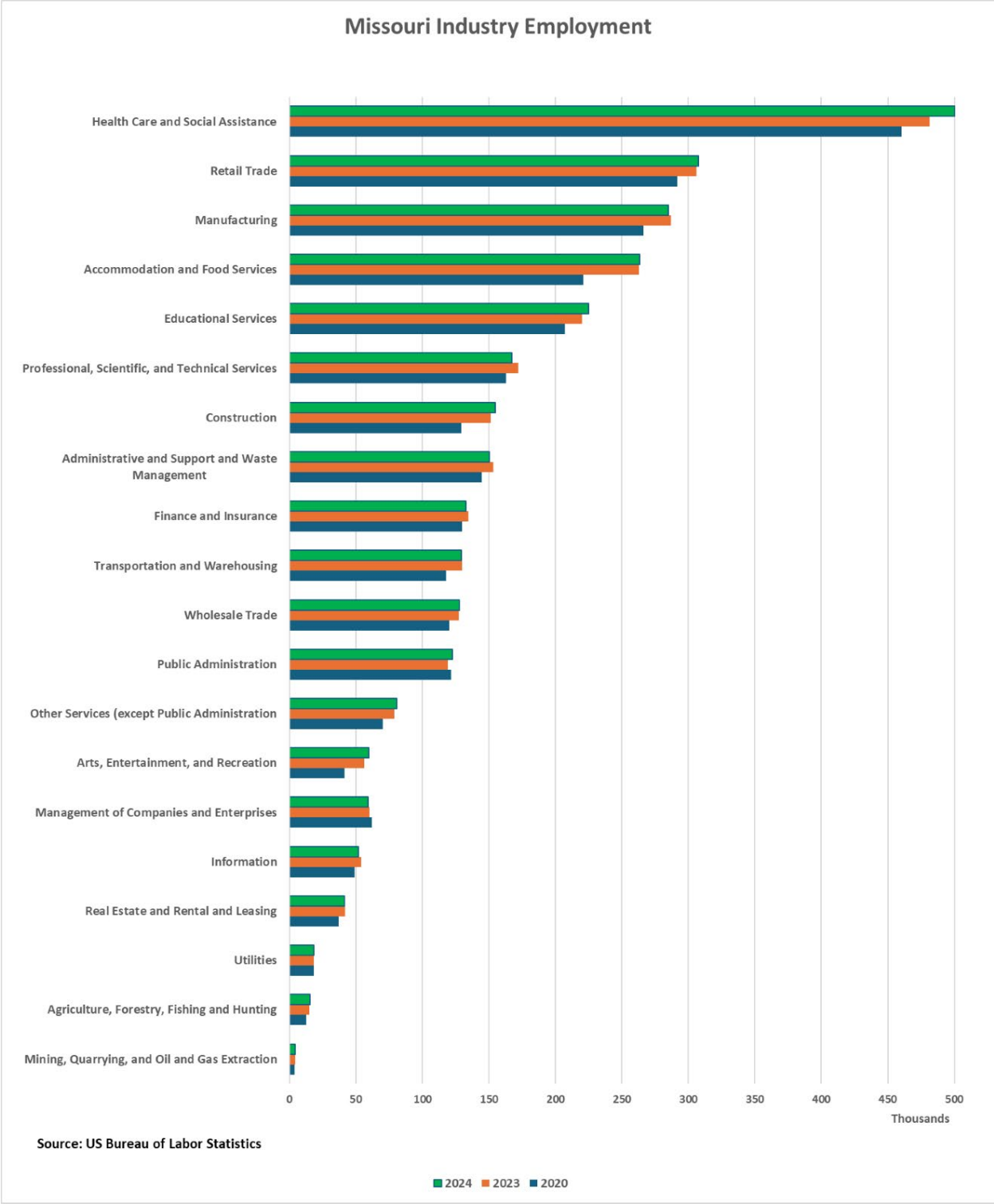
The West Central Region has higher concentrations in *Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers, Animal Production and Aquaculture, Primary Metal Manufacturing, Food Manufacturing, Machinery Manufacturing, and Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry*.

Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the West Central Region from 2022-2032 will be in the *General Merchandise Retailers; Ambulatory Health Care Services; Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods; Total Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals*.

Current Industry Demand

In 2024, Missouri's total covered employment was over 2,898,200. This was an increase of 23,100, or 0.8 percent, compared to 2023. Compared to 2020, or five years ago, Missouri employment increased by 223,100, or 8.3 percent. The annual change in employment from 2023 to 2024 shows growth in some industries with declines in others. *Health Care and Social Assistance* (18,713); *Educational Services* (4,778); *Construction* (3,350); *Public Administration* (3,307); and *Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation* (3,272) were the top five industry sectors in terms of employment gains.

Eight industry sectors had employment declines over the year. The *Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services* industry sector had the greatest employment decline between 2023 and 2024, decreasing by more than 4,500. All industry sectors have a positive employment growth when comparing 2024 to 2020.



Current Occupational Demand

Current occupational demand can be attained through the job ads placed by employers. From May 2024 to April 2025, over 719,000 online job ads were placed for jobs located in Missouri, according to Lightcast.

Job ads were placed for positions at every skill and education level. Missouri uses a system of *Now*, *Next*, and *Later* to categorize jobs according to the typical education and experience required for success on the job. Now jobs typically require a high school education or less and short-term training. Next jobs typically require moderate- to long-term training, experience or education beyond high school. Later jobs typically require a bachelor's degree or higher education.

Now occupations with the highest number of job postings include *Retail Salespersons; Customer Service Representatives; Home Health and Personal Care Aides; Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers; and Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners.*

Occupations with the most job postings in the Next category are *Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers; First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers; Maintenance and Repair Workers; Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing; and Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses.*

Later occupations with the highest number of job postings are *Registered Nurses; Medical and Health Services Managers; Software Developers; General and Operations Managers; and Computer Occupations.*

NOW Top Job Postings - Statewide	
<i>NOW jobs typically require high school education or less and short-term training</i>	
Occupation Title	Job Postings
Retail Salespersons	19,067
Customer Service Representatives	11,447
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	8,681
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	8,460
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	7,263
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	6,663
Fast Food and Counter Workers	6,575
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	5,845
Cashiers	5,528
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	5,353
Security Guards	5,037
Driver/Sales Workers	4,977
Waiters and Waitresses	4,564
Stockers and Order Fillers	4,176
Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers	3,885
NEXT Top Job Postings - Statewide	
<i>NEXT jobs typically require moderate/long-term training or experience or education beyond high school</i>	
Occupation Title	Job Postings
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	17,058
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	14,061
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	10,214
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	9,629
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	9,502
Food Service Managers	6,888
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	6,563
Production Workers, All Other	6,095
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	5,695
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	5,638
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	5,135
Nursing Assistants	5,065
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	4,883
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	4,219
Medical Assistants	4,080
Pharmacy Technicians	4,053
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	3,769
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	3,415
LATER Top Job Postings - Statewide	
<i>LATER jobs typically require a Bachelor's degree or higher education</i>	
Occupation Title	Job Postings
Registered Nurses	52,401
Medical and Health Services Managers	7,903
Software Developers	7,615
General and Operations Managers	7,232
Computer Occupations, All Other	6,609
Project Management Specialists	6,042
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	5,717
Sales Managers	5,598
Physical Therapists	5,255
Financial Managers	5,065
Accountants and Auditors	4,670
Human Resources Specialists	3,923
Data Scientists	3,814
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	3,701
Nurse Practitioners	3,693
Managers, All Other	3,467
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	3,393
<i>Sources: Lightcast Missouri job postings, May 2024 to April 2025</i>	

Industry Projections

The long-term industry projections help determine the industries that are expected to add positions within their organizations over time. The latest round of projections is through the ten-year period ending in 2032.

The projections reveal several industries with both high employment numbers and above average growth rates compared to the state average. The top five industries by numeric employment change are *General Medical and Surgical Hospitals*; *Individual and Family Services*; *Computer Systems Design and Related Services*; *Warehouse Clubs, Supercenters, and Other General Merchandise Retailers*; and *Management of Companies and Enterprises*.

Missouri 2022-2032 Industry Projections				
Industry	Employment		Change	
	2022	2032	Numeric	Percent
Total All Industries	3,134,123	3,270,283	136,160	4.34%
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	143,053	158,027	14,974	10.47%
Individual and Family Services	68,719	78,731	10,012	14.57%
Computer Systems Design and Related Services	45,013	54,889	9,876	21.94%
Warehouse Clubs, Supercenters, and Other General Merchandise Retailers	57,209	66,065	8,856	15.48%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	59,607	65,380	5,773	9.69%
Specialty (except Psychiatric and Substance Abuse) Hospitals	15,226	20,915	5,689	37.36%
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	203,397	208,912	5,515	2.71%
Self Employed Workers, All Jobs	176,986	181,433	4,447	2.51%
Warehousing and Storage	25,020	29,191	4,171	16.67%
Agencies, Brokerages, and Other Insurance Related Activities	33,567	37,511	3,944	11.75%
Semiconductor and Other Electronic Component Manufacturing	8,420	11,802	3,382	40.17%
Couriers and Express Delivery Services	14,529	17,787	3,258	22.42%
Office Administrative Services	7,947	11,133	3,186	40.09%
Federal Government, Excluding Post Office	40,943	44,119	3,176	7.76%
Outpatient Care Centers	16,148	19,214	3,066	18.99%
Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	16,586	19,632	3,046	18.36%
Offices of Other Health Practitioners	19,679	22,706	3,027	15.38%
Home Health Care Services	17,627	20,536	2,909	16.50%
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	57,434	60,246	2,812	4.90%
Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	22,587	25,052	2,465	10.91%

Source: 2022-2033 Long-Term Industry Projections, Missouri Economic Research and Information Center

Occupational Projections

Job openings occur due to three reasons – exits, transfers, and growth. Exits occur as people leave the workforce for reasons such as retirement. Transfers occur when workers leave one occupation for a different occupation. Occupational growth occurs as businesses grow and need more workers to serve their customers.

Emerging occupations can be identified through growth openings. The chart below identifies occupations that have the highest number of growth openings projected by 2032. The total number of openings indicates the projected number of vacancies that businesses will need to fill annually.

Growth openings are projected at all education and training levels and are listed by the highest number of growth openings. The highest number of growth openings in Now occupations are *Home*

Health and Personal Care Aides; Stockers and Order Fillers; Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers; Light Truck Drivers; and Construction Laborers.

The largest growth in Next occupations is in the occupations of *Cooks; Maintenance and Repair Workers; Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers; Nursing Assistants; and First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers.*

Later occupations with the highest growth are *Registered Nurses, General and Operations Managers, Software Developers, Nurse Practitioners, and Medical and Health Services Managers.*

These occupations are consistent with the industries identified as emerging industries.

NOW Top Growth Openings - Statewide <i>Typically requires high school education or less and short-term training</i>					
Occupation Title	Avg. Wage 2023	Annual Openings			
		Exits	Transfers	Growth	Total
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	\$30,270	6,836	5,700	1,212	13,748
Stockers and Order Fillers	\$37,820	3,756	5,911	488	10,155
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	\$38,520	2,144	3,648	346	6,138
Light Truck Drivers	\$46,000	765	990	197	1,952
Construction Laborers	\$53,920	822	1,200	176	2,198
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	\$33,830	3,217	3,212	173	6,602
Fast Food and Counter Workers	\$29,690	3,347	3,572	114	7,033
Security Guards	\$44,490	1,099	1,412	108	2,619
Bartenders	\$35,600	921	1,980	107	3,008
Driver/Sales Workers	\$42,050	589	762	106	1,457
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	\$38,560	1,087	1,698	102	2,887
Animal Caretakers	\$30,920	599	1,059	89	1,747
Taxi Drivers	\$33,230	196	182	82	460
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	\$44,370	441	878	79	1,398
Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	\$40,690	417	843	68	1,328
NEXT Top Growth Openings - Statewide <i>Typically requires moderate/long-term training or experience or education beyond high school</i>					
Occupation Title	Avg. Wage 2023	Annual Openings			
		Exits	Transfers	Growth	Total
Cooks, Restaurant	\$34,000	2,431	2,906	733	6,070
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	\$48,080	1,481	1,535	238	3,254
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$53,440	2,379	3,078	236	5,693
Nursing Assistants	\$36,350	1,991	2,462	207	4,660
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	\$39,460	1,156	2,199	163	3,518
Medical Assistants	\$39,230	581	995	128	1,704
Pharmacy Technicians	\$39,960	406	522	127	1,055
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	\$38,020	578	745	126	1,449
Insurance Sales Agents	\$71,400	518	575	124	1,217
Carpenters	\$62,810	733	991	115	1,839
Computer User Support Specialists	\$57,600	375	628	107	1,110
Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	\$59,290	340	275	106	721
Electricians	\$67,850	450	730	105	1,285
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	\$58,880	227	265	95	587
Production Workers, All Other	\$42,120	409	645	89	1,143
LATER Top Growth Openings - Statewide <i>Typically requires a bachelor's degree or higher education</i>					
Occupation Title	Avg. Wage 2023	Annual Openings			
		Exits	Transfers	Growth	Total
Registered Nurses	\$77,590	2,682	1,661	762	5,105
General and Operations Managers	\$98,520	2,488	5,367	571	8,426
Software Developers	\$107,980	379	791	516	1,686
Nurse Practitioners	\$116,680	201	202	315	718
Medical and Health Services Managers	\$116,370	320	476	310	1,106
Financial Managers	\$149,360	361	572	234	1,167
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	\$73,200	490	910	229	1,629
Accountants and Auditors	\$84,540	948	1,390	176	2,514
Project Management Specialists	\$94,410	451	907	171	1,529
Data Scientists	\$88,210	117	187	163	467
Management Analysts	\$103,400	503	673	157	1,333
Human Resources Specialists	\$67,480	558	968	155	1,681
Computer and Information Systems Managers	\$145,360	186	422	150	758
Personal Financial Advisors	\$136,690	175	224	137	536
Lawyers	\$146,870	368	238	130	736
Sources: 2022-2032 Long-Term Occupational Projections, Missouri Economic Research and Information Center					

Real-Time Labor Market Data

Job ads placed by employers offer another source of information on the knowledge, skills, and certifications requested by Missouri's employers. Lightcast™ is a data tool that spiders to over 51,000 different web sources with job ads. The information found in the ads is placed in a database that can be queried to gain intelligence on employer needs.

Seven industries growing faster than the state average over the last 5 and 10 years were identified in the Economic Analysis section of the Missouri Combined State Plan. These industries are listed below with the specialized skills, certifications, and software and programming requested most by employers in job ads from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

In the software and programming category, Microsoft Office and its products such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access generally rank as highly requested skills across all industries and have therefore been excluded from the specific software and programming skills list. Industry-specific programs identified in the job ads are listed in the table.

Specialized skills that are in-demand for more than one industry include Project Management, Marketing, and Auditing. Qualifications that are common across multiple industries are Driver's License and Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Software and programming skills have many points of overlap among the top growing industries. The SQL programming language was an in-demand skill in four of the seven industries. Python and Salesforce were also requested in job postings in at least three industries.

Employer Skill Needs			
Industry	Specialized Skills	Qualifications	Software and Programming Skills
Construction	Construction	Valid Driver's License	Procore
	Project Management	10-Hour OSHA General Industry Card	Project Management Software
	Subcontracting	CDL Class A License	AutoCAD
	Construction Management	Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	Accounting Software
	Hand Tools	30-Hour OSHA General Industry Card	Salesforce
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Project Management	Valid Driver's License	SQL (Programming Language)
	Auditing	Professional Engineer (PE) License	Python (Programming Language)
	Marketing	Top Secret-Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI Clearance)	Amazon Web Services
	Accounting	Security Clearance	AutoCAD
	Workflow Management	Master of Business Administration (MBA)	Microsoft Azure
Educational Services	Office Equipment	Valid Driver's License	Student Information Systems
	Lesson Planning	Teaching Certificate	Learning Management Systems
	Project Management	Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	Epic EMR
	Marketing	Registered Nurse (RN)	Zoom (Video Conferencing Tool)
	Student Services	American Red Cross (ARC) Certification	Google Workspace
Accommodation and Food Services	Restaurant Operation	Valid Driver's License	Operating Systems
	Food Safety and Sanitation	ServSafe Certification	Property Management Systems
	Cash Handling	Food Handler's Card	Standard Template Library (STL)
	Food Services	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	Inventory Management System
	Cash Register	First Aid Certification	Salesforce
Manufacturing	Continuous Improvement Process	Valid Driver's License	SAP Applications
	Project Management	Security Clearance	Operating Systems
	Marketing	Secret Clearance	Salesforce
	Auditing	Master of Business Administration (MBA)	Python (Programming Language)
	Warehousing	Forklift Certification	SQL (Programming Language)
Retail Trade	Merchandising	Valid Driver's License	Inventory Management System
	Cash Register	Certified Pharmacy Technician	SQL (Programming Language)
	Selling Techniques	Registered Pharmacist (RPh)	Keysight VEE
	Product Knowledge	Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification	Qt (Software)
	Retail Operations	Food Handler's Card	Dashboard
Health Care and Social Assistance	Nursing	Registered Nurse (RN)	Epic EMR
	Nursing Care	Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	Google Workspace
	Medical Records	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	SQL (Programming Language)
	Home Health Care	Valid Driver's License	Dentrix
	Caregiving	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	Python (Programming Language)

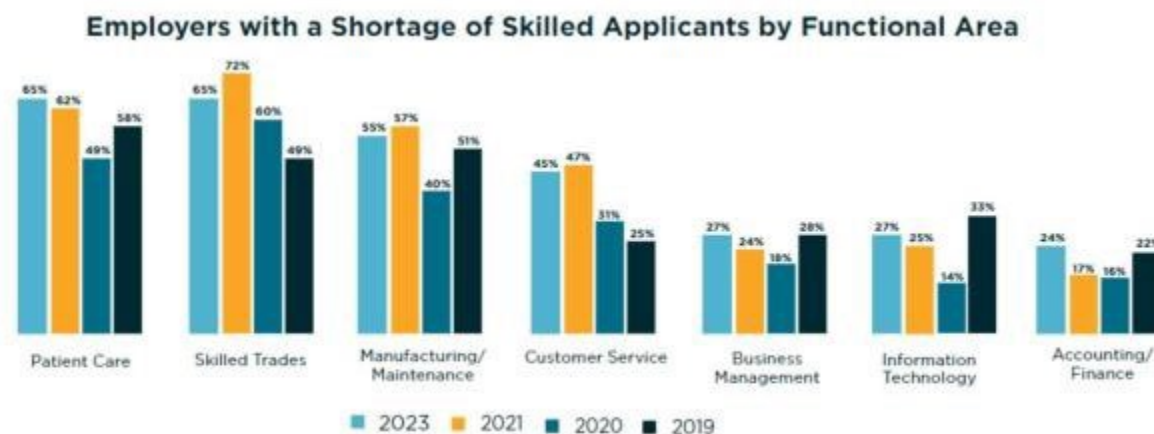
Source: Lightcast, online job ads between Jul. 1, 2024- Jun. 30, 2025

Skills Shortages and Employer Needs

Missouri conducted a survey of employers in 2023 to understand current hiring trends and challenges for employers in the state. In the Missouri Workforce 2023 Employer Survey, employers indicated a primary concern of hiring and retaining top talent and two-thirds of job postings taking more than 30 days to fill. The top barrier is a shortage of applicants with knowledge or skills needed for the position.

The primary shortcomings of applicants were poor work habits, general business or industry knowledge, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and communications or interpersonal skills.

Companies employ workers in a variety of functional areas with different work responsibilities. The Patient Care, Skilled Trades, and Manufacturing functional areas had the largest percentage of employers reporting shortages of skilled applicants. Skill shortages in Customer Service have increased substantially, increasing from 25 percent in 2019 and 31 percent in 2020, to 47 percent in 2021, decreasing slightly to 45 percent in 2023.



Source: Missouri Workforce 2023 Employer Survey

Employers take a variety of measures to address these shortages. Similar to previous surveys, 80 percent of the respondents reported hiring less experienced workers and train them as a measure to address skill shortages in the applicants. Other popular remedial measures were offering increased wages (67 percent) and offering flexible work schedules (52 percent). Offering increased wages rose as a remedial measure from 49 percent of respondents in 2019 to 64 percent in 2020 and 67 percent in 2023.

Needs for the areas where employers are reporting the greatest shortages align with the state's target industry groups and career pathways analysis. The Patient Care area is included in the Health Science career pathway. Patient interaction, infection control, understanding of drugs and medications, as well as the knowledge of diagnostic procedures, scientific methods, and technology are some of the skills needed for success in this industry.

Some of the most in-demand occupations in this area include Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses, and Nursing Assistants. The career pathways analysis shows that certificates such as Home Health Aide, Certified Caregiver, and First Aid CPR AED can provide entry into the Patient Care field. For advancement, education, training, and apprenticeships in the areas of Nursing Assistant certification, Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) can provide either career advancement or other pathways of entry into Health Science and Patient Care.

One of the areas of Skilled Trades is in the Construction industry. Construction has a set of industry-wide technical competencies that represent the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in this industry. Some of the skills that may be needed for success in Construction are craftsmanship, both building and construction design, building, and installation, as well as business fundamental skills such as contracts, budgeting, and cost estimating. Growing occupations in this industry

include Construction Laborers and Electricians. Apprenticeships can help fill this area of need including in areas such as plumbing, carpentry, electrical work, and HVAC engineering and technology.

In the area of Manufacturing and Maintenance, skills include manufacturing process design, development, maintenance, repair, knowledge of and compliance with government regulations, as well as the ability to adapt and consider new ways of doing things. For meeting shortages and expanding career pathways in Manufacturing, certifications in areas such as forklift operation and industrial maintenance can help prepare workers for needs in entry-level production and maintenance occupations, such as Production Workers and Maintenance and Repair Workers. In addition, opportunities to progress in the industry could be supported by certification or education in the areas of CNC Machinist Technology and CAD certification.

B. Workforce Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce in the State and within various state regions. Provide key analytical conclusions in aggregate as well as disaggregated among populations to identify potential disparities in employment and educational attainment and understand labor force conditions for items (i)-(iii) below. Populations analyzed must include individuals with barriers to employment described in the first paragraph of Section II. Analysis must include—

i. Employment and Unemployment

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

ii. Labor Market Trends

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

Population Data

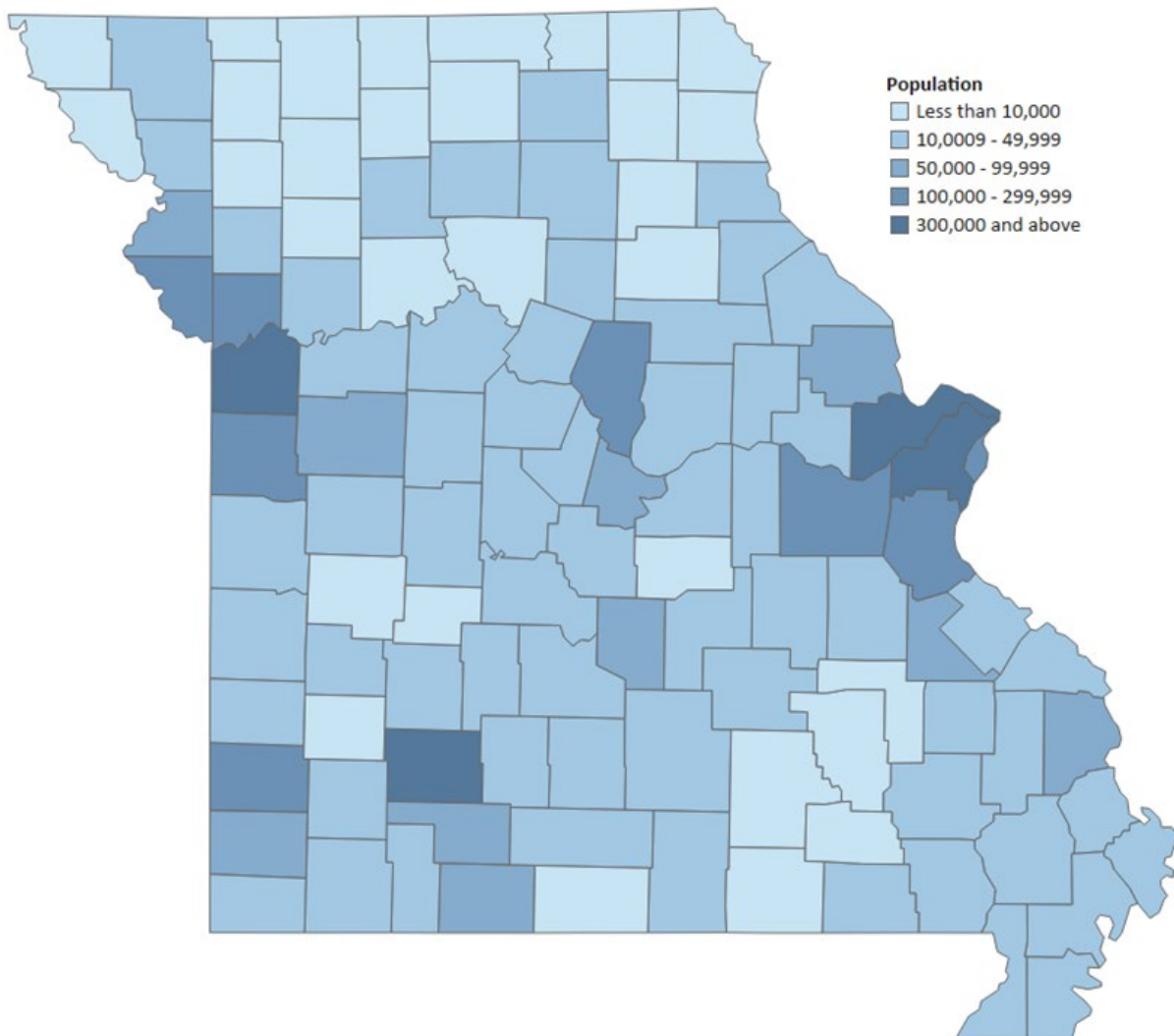
Missouri's population totaled 6.25 million as of July 1, 2024, and increased by 0.6 percent compared to July 1, 2023. The U.S. population increased by 0.98 percent. Only Vermont and West Virginia declined in population over the year. Missouri is the 19th largest state in the U.S.

Counties with the largest population are St. Louis (999,929), Jackson (727,362), St. Charles (423,726), Greene (307,924), and St. Louis City (279,695). The county with the smallest population is Worth County (1,872).

Counties with the largest population increase between 2023 and 2024 were Jackson (7,079), St. Charles (5,768), Clay (3,220), Greene (2,812), and Cass (2,178). St. Louis City had the largest population decline with a decrease of 3,077 residents.

Missouri has a mix of more densely populated areas centered in the state's metropolitan areas, along with a large number of rural areas. In the state, 27 percent of counties have fewer than 10,000 residents.

Missouri County Population, 2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Demographics

In some ways, Missouri's population is similar to the U.S. population. Age group percentages are within one percentage point comparatively. Missouri has a higher portion of the population aged 55 and older, which results in a higher median age.

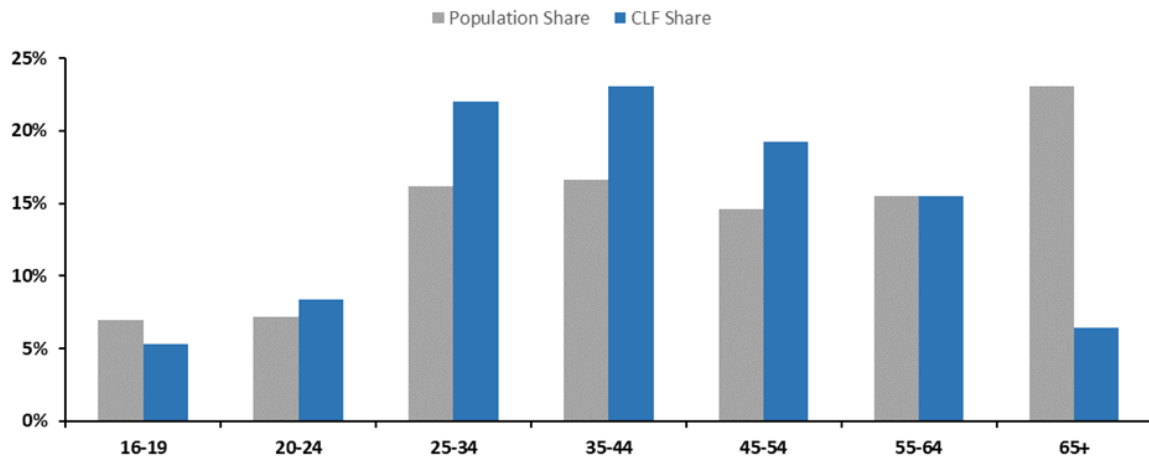
Race/Ethnicity statistics for Missouri are different from the national averages. A higher-than-average percentage of Missouri's residents are white compared to the U.S. In addition, the Hispanic or Latino population is only 5.1 percent in the Missouri workforce compared to 18.3 percent in the U.S. Languages spoken at home by Missourians follow a similar pattern. Compared to U.S. averages, more Missourians speak only English while a lower percentage of Missourians speak other languages.

Missouri supports vulnerable populations through a variety of services and programs. Some of these populations within Missouri are discussed below.

More Missourians report a disability compared to the national average for the working age population. According to the Office of Disability Employment Policy in August 2025, the U.S. labor force participation rate for individuals with disabilities ages 16 to 64 was 42.2 percent compared to 77.9 percent of individuals without disabilities. Missouri's employment rate for individuals with disabilities was 39.6 percent compared to 80.2 percent of individuals without disabilities. This data confirms that individuals with disabilities have greater barriers to employment than those without disabilities. Governor Mike Kehoe's platform includes the priority of providing every child with a world class education and expanding workforce development to help every Missourian prepare and learn new job skills to realize their potential. The Missouri Public Workforce System (MPWS) supports the governor's commitment.

At 12.0 percent, the poverty rate for the state is slightly higher than the nation at 11.1 percent. Missouri ranks 29th in the country's literacy rate. The results from the Nation's Report Card show 42 percent of Missouri's fourth graders and 35 percent of eighth-grade students read at or above the National Assessment of Educational Progress' proficiency level. There is no question that the low poverty and low literacy rates create barriers to employment. The MPWS is addressing these issues through supportive services.

Missouri Population and Labor Force by Age Cohort 2024



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Employment Status, January 2024-December 2024 (based on CPS)

Workforce Demographics		
Age Cohort	Population Share	CLF Share
16-19	7.0%	5.3%
20-24	7.1%	8.4%
25-34	16.1%	22.0%
35-44	16.6%	23.1%
45-54	14.6%	19.3%
55-64	15.5%	15.5%
65+	23.1%	6.5%
35-54	31.2%	42.3%
Gender	Missouri	US
Female	50.1%	48.8%
Male	49.9%	51.2%
Race/Ethnicity		
White alone	81.5%	75.2%
Black or African American alone	12.7%	13.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.6%	1.1%
Asian alone	2.8%	7.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%	0.3%
Two or more races	2.2%	2.6%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	5.1%	18.3%
Disabilities		
With disabilities for ages 18 to 64	12.6%	10.7%
Veterans		
Veterans (Age 18-64)	4.7%	4.2%
Poverty Rates		
Below Federal Poverty Levels for ages 18 to 64	12.1%	11.6%
Primary Language Spoken at Home (over 5 years of age)		
Who Speak		
English only	93.4%	78.0%
Spanish	2.9%	13.4%
Other Indo-European	1.8%	3.8%
Asian and Pacific Islander	1.4%	3.5%
Other languages	0.6%	1.2%

Sources:

U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Employment Status, January 2024-December 2024 (based on CPS)

Missouri is also home to more veterans than the national average. According to the American Community Survey 2023 1-year estimates, civilian veterans are 7.1 percent of Missouri's population or 341,191 individuals. For 2024, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 43.2 percent of Missouri's veteran population, 18 years and over, is employed in the civilian labor force. Their unemployment rate is 2.7 percent, which is lower than the national average of 3.0 percent.

With more than 75,000 individuals involved with the Missouri Department of Corrections (DOC), DOC has a large number of individuals facing barriers to gain and maintain meaningful employment. Currently, DOC has an approximate 35% unemployment rate for individuals under Probation and Parole supervision, leading to roughly 18,500 supervised Missourians who are unemployed, which is 10 times higher than the national unemployment rate. Missouri has released an average of nearly 12,500 individuals over the last four years. The MPWS participates in both state and national re-entry initiatives.

In state fiscal year 2025, the Missouri Department of Social Services served the following benefits to unduplicated individuals and households:

- SNAP to 660,033 individuals in 324,645 households;
- TA (Cash Assistance) to 12,319 individuals in 5,011 households;
- Mo HealthNet (Medicaid) to 1,266,271 individuals;

According to a 2024 point-in-time count by HUD, Missouri's homeless population was 7,312 compared to 771,000 across the nation. 32.6 percent of Missouri's homeless were unsheltered.

At peak times, particularly during harvest seasons, there can be as many as 10,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Missouri. In PY 2024, the MPWS through OWD conducted outreach services to 2,057 of these workers and enrolled 170 participants in job center services.

Displaced homemakers generally have little paid work experience; therefore, barriers to employment for them are higher than for displaced workers. In PY 2024, the MPWS, through OWD and the AEL program, provided services to over 270 displaced homemakers.

According to the American Community Survey 2023 1- year estimates, there are 2,556,271 households in Missouri. Single parent households with male, no spouse/partner vs. female, no spouse partner are 18.7 percent (with 1.2 percent including children under 18) and 27.4 percent (with 4.7 percent including children under 18), respectively. Single parent households with children typically have a greater barrier to employment than households with two parents and children. The largest contributing factor is the lack of reliable childcare.

In FY 2023, there were 11,575 Missouri children in the foster system. These children are at greater risk of homelessness. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), during the 2022 – 2023 school year, the total of homeless students enrolled, reported through the McKinney-Vento definition, was 34,565 out of approximately 879,000 students, prekindergarten through grade 12. This total included students in shelters, unsheltered, doubled up in housing situations, or in hotels/motels. Based on the most recent core data from

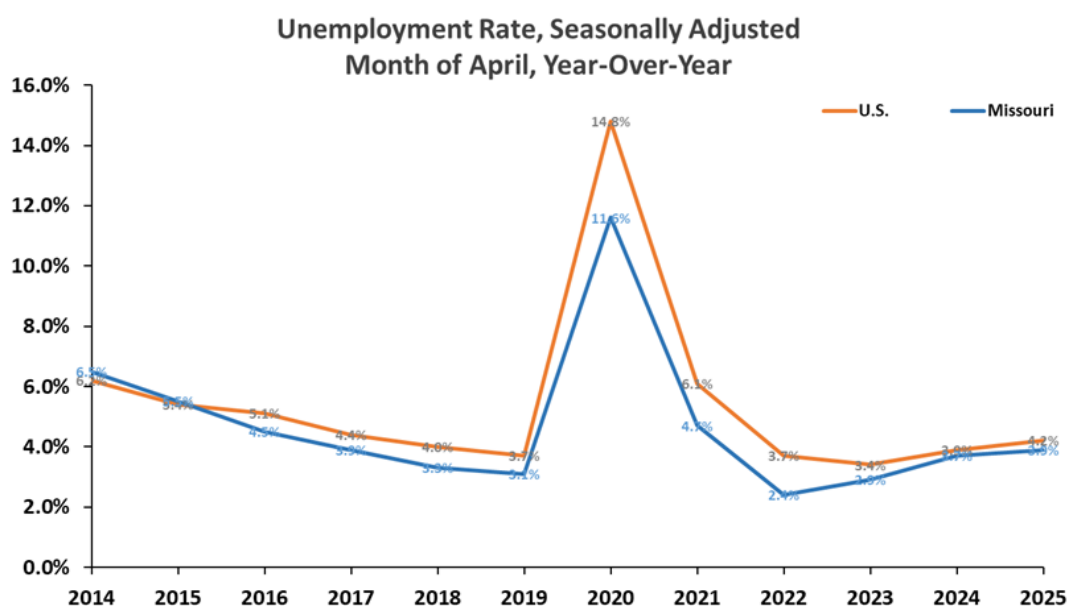
DESE's Office of Special Education, for school year 2023-2024, the number of students with individualized education plans, age 14 to 21 and currently enrolled in school, is 39,742.

Missouri's Division of Youth Services reports that 577 youths were committed to its care during FY 2024. The population makeup is 81 percent male and 19 percent female, the average age is 15.7 years, 53 percent had received prior mental health services, 59 percent had a history of substance abuse, and 31 percent had a prior educational disability diagnosis. Many partners in the MPWS have programs specifically designed to assist youth and students with barriers of all types. This at-risk population is the next generation of workforce participants. Assistance provided to youth and students at this stage can improve their opportunities for competitive employment and quality of life for the future.

Employment and Unemployment

The unemployment rate measures the number of persons out of work but actively seeking employment relative to the civilian labor force. The seasonally adjusted unemployment data over last 12 months (April 2024 to April 2025) shows a stable trend in the unemployment rates both in the U.S. and in Missouri. In Missouri, the unemployment rate ranged between 3.6 and 3.9 percent over the last 12 months while in the U.S. it ranged from 3.9 to 4.2 percent. An unemployment rate of 3 to 5 percent is considered healthy for the economy. During 2022, Missouri's unemployment rate reached the lowest rate in the history of the series since collection began in 1976. The unemployment rate has increased, but remains low, indicating a fairly balanced labor market.

As of April 2025, the nation's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.2 percent, an increase from April 2024 (3.9 percent) and April 2023 (3.4 percent). Similarly, Missouri's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in April 2025 was 3.9 percent, an increase from April 2024 (3.7 percent) and from April 2023 (2.9 percent).

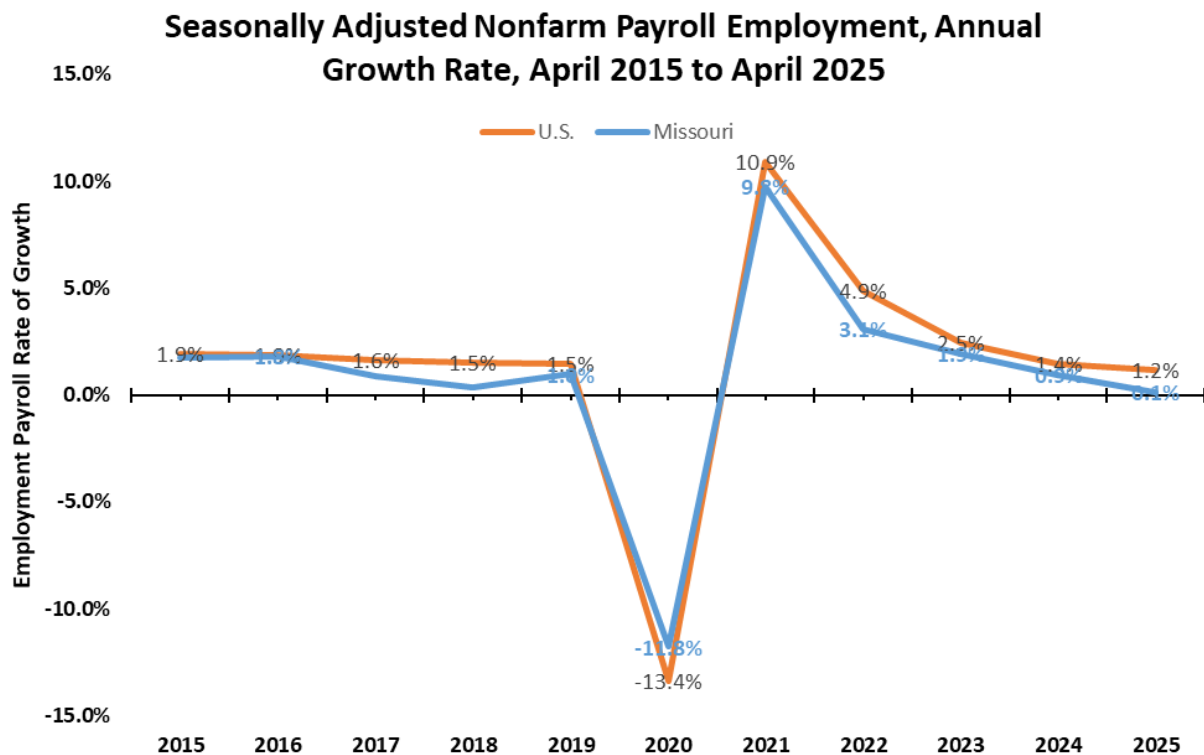


Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Seasonally Adjusted

Nonfarm payroll employment is the estimate of employment in the nonagricultural sector of the economy. In April 2025, national nonfarm payroll employment totaled more than 159.5 million. This was an increase of 1.2 percent compared to April 2024, representing more than 1.88 million jobs.

Statewide, Missouri's seasonally adjusted nonfarm payroll employment topped just over 2.99 million in April 2025, representing an increase of 0.1 percent, or 4,200 jobs, compared to April 2024. Missouri nonfarm employment followed a similar trend as the U.S.

Not seasonally adjusted annual data shows that from 2023 to 2024 there was 2.09 million nonfarm payroll employment gains (1.3 percent) nationally and 20,000 (1.6 percent) in Missouri.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, CES, accessed May 2025

Labor Force Participation

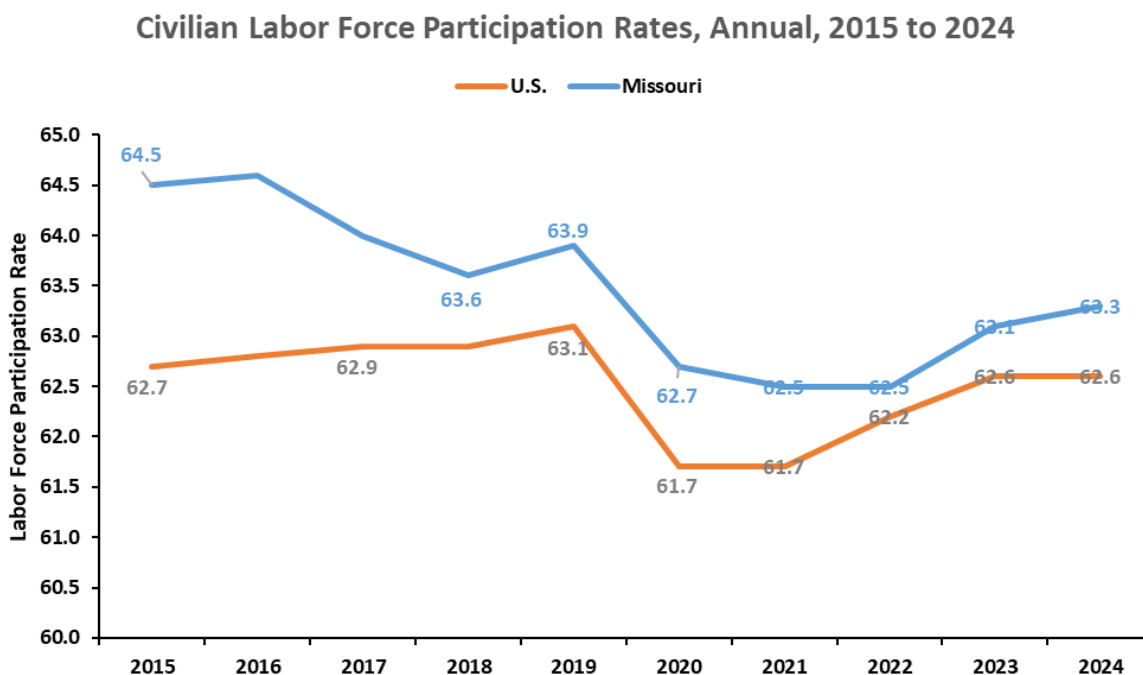
The civilian labor force is defined as the number of non-institutionalized persons aged 16 years and older who are either gainfully employed or are unemployed but actively seeking work. The civilian labor force in Missouri totaled over three million in 2024. In 2024, Missouri's seasonally adjusted labor force totaled 3,131,182 with a civilian labor force participation rate (LFPR) of 63.3 percent. The LFPR is the ratio of the civilian labor force to the population.

In April 2025, 60.9 percent, or 3,031,707, of Missouri's civilian non-institutionalized population were employed and only 3.9 percent of labor force, or 124,098 were unemployed. The remaining portion of the population were either not seeking work or have exited the workforce.

According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in 2024, the 35 to 54 age cohort comprised 31.2 percent of Missouri's population and 42.3 percent of its civilian labor force. The 65+ age cohort made up 23.1 percent of the population and 6.5 percent of the civilian labor force.

The national LFPR peaked in the 1990s at 67 percent, where it seemed to stabilize. However, since 2001 the LFPR has been falling, staying at 62 percent in 2022 and above 62.5 percent in most of 2023 and early 2024.

Missouri's LFPR reached the highest peak of close to 70 percent in late 1990's to early 2000's. This rate has been declining steadily since 2002, staying close to 64 percent in 2018, 2019, and 2020. Recently, Missouri's LFPR has averaged just above 63 percent, reaching 63.4 percent in April 2025. Missouri's LFPR has been higher than the national average for more than a decade.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Top Growing Occupations

Over the long term, industry needs for certain occupations grow while others decline. A trained and ready workforce is needed to fill employer demand and offer jobseekers bright prospects for employment.

Long-term projections are produced in each state in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics and Employment and Training Administration. These projections provide insight on the occupations that are growing and declining. The annual number of openings account for three different types of vacancies - exits, transfers, and growth. Exits occur as individuals leave the workforce for reasons such as retirement. Transfers occur as a person leaves an occupation to work in a different occupation. Growth simply means that more people are needed to work in the occupation. Regardless of the reason for the openings, skilled workers are needed to fill them.

Missouri adds value to the standard projections template by including the ACT WorkKeys Assessment Levels typically required for success in each of the 800+ occupations. Since most of Missouri's counties participate in the Certified Work Ready Communities program, the levels help those researching careers find good options based on their personal assessment.

Missouri uses a system of Now, Next and Later to categorize the occupations according to the training and education typically required for success on the job. **Now** occupations typically require a high school education or less along with short-term training. **Next** occupations typically require moderate to long-term training or experience and or education beyond high school. **Later** occupations typically require a bachelor's degree or higher.

A "career grade" is assigned to each occupation based on the outlook for total openings, rate of growth, and average wages. Those with a grade of A or B are projected to have the best outlook in the long-term.

Top occupations in the Now category with over 10,000 annual openings from 2022-2032 are *Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Cashiers, and Stockers and Order Fillers*. The reason for a high number of openings is turnover within these jobs. Although the wages are lower for these occupations, there are projected to be a high number of openings, and the occupations can provide a first step on a career pathway.

Occupations with the highest number of annual openings in the Next category are *Cooks, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Nursing Assistants, First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Maintenance and Repair Workers, and Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators*.

General and Operations Managers, Registered Nurses, Accountants and Auditors, Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education, and Software Developers are occupations with a large number of openings in the Later category. All of these occupations are considered to have a strong career outlook from 2022 to 2032.

Many high demand occupations correspond directly to the seven high growth industries. Occupations such as General and Operations Managers, Software Developers, and Accountants and Auditors can support several industries.

NOW Top Job Openings - Statewide			
NOW jobs typically require high school education or less and short-term training			
Grade	Occupation Title	Annual Opening	Average Annual
A	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	13,748	\$30,270
C+	Cashiers	11,767	\$29,380
B+	Stockers and Order Fillers	10,155	\$37,820
B	Retail Salespersons	9,426	\$35,700
B	Waiters and Waitresses	8,512	\$36,810
B	Fast Food and Counter Workers	7,033	\$29,690
C+	Office Clerks, General	6,968	\$43,330
B	Customer Service Representatives	6,736	\$43,280
B	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6,602	\$33,830
B+	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	6,138	\$38,520
C	Cooks, Fast Food	5,583	\$28,820
C	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	4,348	\$40,980
B	Childcare Workers	3,025	\$30,270
B+	Bartenders	3,008	\$35,600
B	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	2,887	\$38,560
C+	Food Preparation Workers	2,721	\$30,460
B+	Security Guards	2,619	\$44,490
B	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	2,606	\$32,350
B	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,563	\$30,880
B	Receptionists and Information Clerks	2,371	\$34,060
NEXT Top Job Openings - Statewide			
NEXT jobs typically require moderate/long-term training or experience or education beyond high school			
Grade	Occupation Title	Annual Opening	Average Annual
A	Cooks, Restaurant	6,070	\$34,000
B+	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5,693	\$53,440
B+	Nursing Assistants	4,660	\$36,350
B+	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	3,518	\$39,460
B+	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	3,254	\$48,080
C+	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	3,037	\$44,240
B	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	2,519	\$46,990
B	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	2,301	\$34,550
B	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	2,139	\$65,150
C+	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2,040	\$49,020
B+	Carpenters	1,839	\$62,810
B+	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,818	\$74,090
B	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	1,784	\$47,380
B+	Medical Assistants	1,704	\$39,230
B	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	1,694	\$77,720
B+	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	1,574	\$69,370
B	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	1,514	\$38,110
B+	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	1,449	\$38,020
B	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,352	\$41,110
B+	Electricians	1,285	\$67,850
LATER Top Job Openings - Statewide			
LATER jobs typically require a Bachelor's degree or higher education			
Grade	Occupation Title	Annual Opening	Average Annual
A+	General and Operations Managers	8,426	\$98,520
A	Registered Nurses	5,105	\$77,590
A	Accountants and Auditors	2,514	\$84,540
B	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	2,205	\$55,530
A+	Software Developers	1,686	\$107,980
A	Human Resources Specialists	1,681	\$67,480
A+	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	1,629	\$73,200
A	Managers, All Other	1,618	\$117,730
A	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	1,607	\$83,050
A	Project Management Specialists	1,529	\$94,410
B	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	1,424	\$63,500
B	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term	1,362	\$39,260
A+	Management Analysts	1,333	\$103,400
A+	Financial Managers	1,167	\$149,360
A+	Medical and Health Services Managers	1,106	\$116,370
B+	Public Relations Specialists	884	\$68,740
B	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	865	\$60,510
B	Training and Development Specialists	760	\$64,180
A+	Computer and Information Systems Managers	758	\$145,360
A	Lawyers	736	\$146,870
Source: 2022-2032 Long-Term Occupational Projections, Missouri Economic Research and Information Center			

Educational Attainment

Total education attainment in Missouri lags the U.S. average in education for higher levels of attainment. A higher percentage of Missourians have either a high school diploma or some college education but no degree compared to the national average. However, a smaller portion of Missourians have earned an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or graduate/professional degree than the national average.

The regional economies in the state vary, as do the educational attainment rates in those regions. In general, a greater percentage of the workforce has a high school diploma in Missouri's rural areas compared to urban areas, and more have an associate degree, bachelor's degree, graduate/professional degree in urban areas of the state.

Missouri Educational Attainment Ages 25+						
Region	Less than High School	High School or Equivalent or Higher	Some College (no degree)	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
United States	10.6%	26.2%	19.4%	8.8%	21.3%	13.7%
Missouri	8.5%	30.3%	21.0%	8.3%	19.6%	12.3%
Central	9.1%	32.4%	19.5%	8.4%	18.5%	12.1%
Kansas City	7.2%	27.9%	22.5%	8.1%	21.8%	12.5%
North	9.8%	41.3%	20.3%	8.0%	13.6%	7.0%
Ozark	7.6%	30.9%	23.9%	8.5%	18.4%	10.7%
South Central	15.5%	40.4%	20.9%	8.1%	9.5%	5.6%
Southeast	13.0%	39.3%	19.7%	7.7%	12.9%	7.4%
Southwest	12.7%	37.0%	21.8%	7.8%	14.0%	6.7%
St. Louis	6.5%	23.6%	20.2%	8.6%	24.1%	17.0%
West Central	10.4%	38.8%	20.9%	9.3%	12.8%	7.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2023 5 Year Estimates

iv Comparison of Economic and Workforce Analytical Conclusion. Describe areas of opportunity for meeting hiring, education, and skills needs identified in the economy compared to the assets available in the labor force in the state.

In Missouri, 65 percent of jobs will require education or training beyond a high school diploma. Jobs requiring a bachelor's degree or higher make up 30 percent of the jobs while 35 percent of the jobs require moderate training, such as a certificate, industry-recognized credential, associate's degree, or apprenticeship.

An analysis of the economic data indicates that there is still a high need for entry and mid-level workers in the service industry. The MPWS can play a role by educating youth on these industries while working with employers to develop career pathways to retain employees. The provision of work-based learning experiences such as job shadowing, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships will also aid in building more solid pathways in these industries.

There will also continue to be a need for more skilled workers in health care, information technology (IT), accounting, and secondary school teaching. The MPWS is addressing these issues through innovative practices. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is developing a teacher apprenticeship program to cultivate this pipeline. Several registered apprenticeships have been developed for the information technology field, and Missouri's college and university system is responding to employer demand by ensuring students are provided many options for IT specialization. The workforce data analysis defines characteristics of Missouri's current workforce and helps the MPWS identify gaps for improvement. There is a continued need to focus on diversity and equity practices, as well as inclusion for workers with disabilities. Missourians with barriers to employment have been and will continue to be the main focus moving forward. This includes justice-involved individuals, people in poverty, and veterans. Finally, the data yields a new focus area for the MPWS. Both men and women ages 20 to 24 years had an unemployment rate at nearly twice the overall average. This information will be critical to support strategies for youth services, including educating and engaging youth in career exploration and employment opportunities. The MPWS will also focus on flexible service delivery methods to attract more youth to its programs.

Further analysis of the state's workforce development activities, including education and training, reveals Missouri's commitment to deliver services to meet the education and skill needs of its jobseekers and the hiring needs of its employers. These activities align with Governor Kehoe's Workforce of the Future Challenge aimed at improving both educational and employment outcomes. In response to the Governor's Challenge, a stakeholder work group established 12 recommendations that address gaps identified through analysis of education and training in the state. Those recommendations are industry-driven strategies that include a review of current workforce assessment tools, development of work-based learning opportunities, incentivization for apprenticeships, and expansion of K-12 career advisors. The MPWS is capitalizing on the Challenge to provide more opportunities for worker mobility.

C. COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYTICAL CONCLUSION. DESCRIBE AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEETING HIRING, EDUCATION, AND SKILLS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ECONOMY COMPARED TO THE ASSETS AVAILABLE IN THE LABOR FORCE IN THE STATE.

In Missouri, 65 percent of jobs will require education or training beyond a high school diploma. Jobs requiring a bachelor's degree or higher make up 30 percent of the jobs while 35 percent of the jobs require moderate training, such as a certificate, industry-recognized credential, associate's degree, or apprenticeship.

An analysis of the economic data indicates that there is still a high need for workers in the service industry at all education and training levels. The MPWS can play a role by educating youth on these occupations while working with employers to develop career pathways to retain employees. The provision of work-based learning experiences such as job shadowing, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships will also aid in building more solid pathways in these industries.

The data indicates a need for more skilled workers in health care, information technology (IT), accounting, and secondary school teaching. The MPWS is addressing these issues through innovative practices. Through a partnership between OWD and the Department of Elementary and

Secondary Education (DESE), 332 apprentices were enrolled and served in a Child Development Associate apprenticeship program, an entry point into teaching careers. All the program sponsors for the grant continue as registered apprenticeship programs, and 25 registered apprenticeship programs now offer early childhood educator programs in Missouri, through childcare facilities, colleges, universities, high schools and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. Several registered apprenticeships have been developed for the information technology field, and Missouri's college and university system is responding to employer demand by ensuring students are provided many options for IT specialization. A new initiative operated by the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD) aims to address health care occupation needs. The Health Education Accelerated Learning & Skills (HEALS) initiative aligns training with industry needs, supports successful training models and fosters credential and apprenticeship innovation to equip learners for in-demand occupations, promoting career advancement and lifelong learning.

The workforce data analysis defines characteristics of Missouri's current workforce and helps the MPWS identify gaps for improvement. Missourians with barriers to employment have been and will continue to be the main focus moving forward. This includes individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, people in poverty, and veterans. Finally, the data yields a new focus area for the MPWS. Both men and women ages 20 to 24 years had an unemployment rate at nearly twice the overall average, and the rate has increased during the past year. This information will be critical to support strategies for youth services, including educating and engaging youth in career exploration and employment opportunities. The MPWS will also focus on flexible service delivery methods to attract more youth to its programs.

Further analysis of the state's workforce development activities, including education and training, reveals Missouri's commitment to deliver services to meet the education and skill needs of its jobseekers and the hiring needs of its employers. These activities align with Governor Kehoe's Workforce of the Future Challenge, with the charge of alignment of key workforce stakeholders, including K-12 schools, local businesses and industry, career and technical education programs, and higher education. The work group, which included members of the SWDB, employers, and the MPWS, identified opportunities to strengthen and expand work-based learning, employer engagement, workforce development early career exploration, school counseling, and youth career advising. Through partnerships, Missouri workforce stakeholders will implement changes and new initiatives that address opportunities identified through workforce system analysis.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required ⁶ and optional one-stop delivery system partners.⁷

~~[6]~~ Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

~~[7]~~ Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

The MPWS is comprised of a network of collaborative partnerships which work effectively to deliver workforce development activities. In addition to the WIOA core and required partners, Missouri has implemented a combined plan, which includes the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) programs. The decision to include these partners was based on the need to ensure that individuals with barriers, particularly those with low income, youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, and those who may be exhausting lifetime eligibility under the TANF program received services through MPWS. Through WIOA implementation, the MPWS now extends to many other stakeholders who provide statewide access to their services, including Centers for Independent Living, professional associations, local chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, local community action agencies, local school districts and community rehabilitation providers. Through these partnerships, the MPWS is able to provide significant outreach and services to both jobseekers and employers.

As part of a statewide network of job centers and partner organizations, the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development's (DHEWD) Office of Workforce Development (OWD) coordinates and aligns its partnership with the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' (DOLIR) Division of Employment Security (DES); Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) and Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR); Department of Social Services (DSS), including Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), and the Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives (OWCI). Together, the partners provide a robust menu of vital employment, reemployment, and support services to meet the needs of jobseekers and employers, including individuals with barriers to employment and the underemployed.

The MPWS has 19 partners that provide statewide services and collaborate to deliver education and training programs. Referrals are made between partners as an individual's needs are identified,

increasing the overall footprint of services available to customers. Missouri's employment services offer opportunities to begin or progress on a career pathway and may include, but are not limited to, short-term training, apprenticeships, employability skills, on-the-job training (OJT), job placement, resume preparation, interviewing skills, networking, occupational exploration, and retention services.

As part of the MPWS, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) expands its ability to serve its customers. MVR's workforce development activities assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for, enter into, engage in, advance in or retain competitive integrated employment. These activities include assessments, vocational guidance and counseling, and job preparation activities such as disability awareness, resume writing, and interviewing skills. Additionally, MVR provides eligible individuals with training services such as on-the-job training (OJT), apprenticeships, customized employment, progressive employment, and funding for customers to attend community colleges and universities.

MVR offers a host of employment and training services to students and youth with disabilities from as early as age 14 to 24. These services aim to aid students and youth with disabilities with the transition from high school to the work world or onto higher education and training services. They include pre-employment services to ensure that young individuals with disabilities are better prepared and have more opportunities for competitive integrated employment.

Through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with job centers, MVR is the primary referral source from job center partners for individuals with disabilities. MVR counselors frequently visit various job centers, both full-service sites and affiliates, to provide services to consumers in a timely fashion. MVR is available for technical assistance to job center staff regarding rehabilitation technology and accommodations in the workplace.

MVR's commitment to employer services is evidenced by its investment in its Business Services Program. The team of business services professionals is a resource for employers' needs. The team provides employers with regional and national access to a talent pool of skilled workers. They specialize in helping businesses achieve a diversified workforce.

RSB provides a broad range of services to eligible youth and adults designed to increase competence and confidence in the skills needed to gain or maintain employment. Services include blindness and daily living skills training, disability/blind awareness, employability skills training, as well as career planning and job readiness training.

RSB works with local employers to identify career exploration and competitive-integrated employment opportunities. Information gleaned from this coordination is then shared with clients that participate in RSB's vocational rehabilitation (VR) and transition services programs, including pre-employment transition services. RSB staff engage in outreach activities meeting directly with employers to identify employment needs and educate employers about the services RSB can offer for existing and new employees.

RSB engages in outreach activities to provide information about RSB's Programs and Services. RSB's Prevention of Blindness Program (POB) participates in outreach activities such as health

fairs, job fairs, homeless connects, employer health fairs, and work with the local workforce development boards (WDBs) etc. RSB and POB staff with various local community action agencies, and food pantries where they can provide free vision screenings as well as information about RSB's programs to underserved populations.

RSB has formal contract agreements with community rehabilitation providers to work with employers and assist clients with job search, job placement, and customized employment opportunities. Other services include work-based learning experiences, task analysis, and job coaching when needed. RSB Pre-Employment Transition Services provide high school age youth with a foundation for the school-to-work transition through employment readiness skills instruction, including workplace readiness training, job exploration counseling, and self-advocacy training.

Before COVID-19, the MPWS offered Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) activities in traditional settings, primarily physical class sites at educational institutions, job centers, and community organizations. The agility demonstrated by local AEL service providers to endure academic and workforce upheaval led to innovations in service delivery that bring AEL activities to the citizens who need them most. To address intensified barriers, including childcare, transportation, access to classrooms, reduced study time, and the need for immediate employment, the MPWS expanded AEL service delivery through virtual methods and by utilizing partnerships with employers and other community-based organizations.

AEL service providers across Missouri customize their virtual learning experiences based on the needs of students in their region. At the state level, AEL closely monitors the performance of distance education programming in real-time to ensure equitable service delivery. Missouri also offers a virtual platform, MOlearns, to expedite High School Equivalency attainment for students with higher literacy levels. The statewide AEL distance education standards allow flexibility for adult students with internet access to overcome barriers to attending a physical classroom. The MPWS provides access to these tailored services through co-location and the one-stop delivery system.

The MPWS has strong relationships with employers, which are valuable in providing services to employed adult learners and those seeking employment. Utilizing advancements in service delivery, AEL classrooms are mobile and versatile. This allows employers such as WEG Transformers and La-Z-Boy, to invest in their current employees by providing the infrastructure for English acquisition or basic education at the worksite. By providing AEL services free at the workplace, the MPWS supports employers' recruitment and retention while offering education integrated with workforce readiness to jobseekers facing barriers to sustainable employment. This delivery method provides incentives for employers and employees while opening the door for expansion of AEL's Integrated Education and Training (IET).

Additionally, through OWD, the MPWS offers an array of employment services to adults, dislocated workers, in-school youth, out-of-school youth, and unemployment insurance (UI) claimants. This includes sharing of labor market information, job matching and referrals to open positions, job preparation workshops, and one-on-one career counseling. Missouri provides co-enrollment

services to leverage resources and provides comprehensive service delivery to customers with barriers to employment. If it is determined that customers need individualized career or training services, they are referred to partners to meet their identified needs.

Missouri's employer services include specialized recruitment and customized job fairs, posting of open positions, provision of Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and federal bonding programs, incumbent worker training, qualified applicant referral, customized employment, apprenticeships, and access to justice-involved individuals and other customers with barriers. Core, combined, and required partners' education and training activities include access and funding for short-term training, high school equivalency, postsecondary education, life skills training, workplace readiness training, and skill-based training.

The MPWS's Department of Social Services (DSS), Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives (OWCI) offers employment and training services through SkillUP, the Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) Program, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), Excel Centers (also known as Adult High Schools), the Futures Program, Jobs League, and Community Service Block Grant (CSBG). OWCI also administers multiple new decision item programs each fiscal year, contingent upon the allocation of TANF and SNAP funding for additional wrap-around services or to address region specific needs. The department continues to work toward identifying clients across programs for efficiencies to ensure the best programs to meet the individual's career goals are recommended and assistance is provided in enrolling in the recommended program.

SkillUP and MWA offer a variety of employment and training activities including short-term training, OJT, job search assistance, resume preparation, direct linkages to employers, work experience, and employability skills. Both SkillUP and MWA require performance outcomes, which include employment. These programs blend resources with other agencies and local nonprofits.

SkillUP provides training, education, and employment preparation for SNAP recipients. SkillUP has currently 184 provider locations throughout the state in locations administered through the Missouri Community College Association, community partnerships, workforce development boards, and the Missouri Community Action Agency Network. In FY 2024, SkillUP providers served almost 3,400 clients.

MWA provides training, education, and employment preparation for TA (cash assistance) recipients. MWA currently has 56 physical provider locations but covers every county. Providers are required to maintain a presence in each county and meet with recipients at alternate locations as needed. The MWA program assists participants in completing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). Once the IEP is completed, the MWA program assists in overcoming many common barriers to the family sustaining employment. Supportive services range from assisting with transportation reimbursement to childcare fees to providing funds for tools or uniforms. In FY 2024, 6,159 clients were referred to MWA providers. MWA providers also provide training, education, and employment services to SkillUP recipients and Children's Division Older Youth ages 16-23.

DSS contracts with JAG Missouri to provide TANF funding for the Jobs for America's Graduates program. It also contracts directly with the school districts through MOUs. For FY 2026, there are 74 school districts that administer 116 programs throughout the state. DSS communicates with JAG

Missouri, which passes information to the specialists at each school to help families. Funding is provided under TANF (purpose three) to prevent and reduce out of wedlock pregnancies. DSS provides program, invoicing, and monitoring support for JAG. It participates in state and national conferences as judges. OWCI's role with JAG is to create and modify policies, procedures and manuals, conduct research, and review program outcomes to justify TANF funding.

JAG serves students who have potential but also face significant barriers to success, such as poverty, challenging family situations, and/or a history of personal trauma. Since its founding in 1979, JAG has served more than 1.4 million students nationally.

A JAG Specialist is a teacher that runs the program for each school as an elective course that students are recommended for via school administration, other teachers, and school counselors. Students benefit from the JAG Advantage, a program model that is based upon three strategies of learning: Project Based Learning, Trauma Informed Care, and Employer Engagement. There are three different program types: Middle School, High School (Multi-year), and Alternative School. Each type of program has unique requirements that address the particular needs of each type of student.

JAG Missouri has proven to be an effective and successful program by increasing graduation rates, academic performance, attendance, job placement, and continued education or training year after year. For FY 2024, there were 4,244 enrolled individuals from grades 6-12, with 889 graduates. DSS also reviews positive outcome rates from the previous year's graduates. For FY 2024, 83 of graduates from the class of 2023 transitioned to postsecondary education, gained employment, and/or entered the military in the year of follow-up specialists completed.

JAG works with strong, but socially unprepared students. It is a successful program because it sees the value of these students and unleashes the potential they have. JAG students have talent, grit, and a hunger to learn. Many times, all these students need to succeed is someone who believes in them and creates opportunities for them to show the world what they can do.

Other MPWS partners have developed unique ways to collaborate with this essential program focused on youth. MODOT has established an internal team focused on engaging with JAG students across the state. The team goes to area high schools with JAG programs and provides education about transportation and trades related careers. This includes sharing information about MODOT career opportunities and basic information about the state hiring portal to access MODOT positions. OWD also partners with JAG by providing information and resources about job center services, including tours of the centers and talking with staff about the available services.

Jobs League (formerly Summer Jobs League) offers low-income individuals age 14 to 24 years old who qualify under TANF, by providing opportunities to gain real world skills through paid work-based learning experience. The Jobs League Program measures the percentage of participants returning to education, retaining or gaining employment, or a combination of both. In FY 2024, 78 percent of participants had a positive outcome either returning to education, retaining or gaining employment, or any combination.

The Futures Program allows the Community Partnerships to serve older youth ages 16 through 23, who are in the foster care system or were in the custody of Children's Division (Aftercare) and are residents of Missouri. The program provides employment services, education and training assistance, and wrap-around services by providing an array of services tailored to the specific strengths and needs of each youth. Case management and coaching assist the youth in gaining the abilities and skills to overcome challenges and remove barriers through life skills tools, learning assistance, and career planning.

The Excel Center is an accredited tuition-free high school that provides adults over the age of 21 the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. While earning a diploma, students can earn college credits and a variety of industry-recognized certifications to increase their earning potential and mobility in the workforce. All four Missouri Excel Centers offer free drop-in childcare centers, transportation assistance, flexible class schedules, extended hours, and year-round operation to support students as they work toward the goal of earning a diploma. While participating in the program, students benefit from supportive relationships with staff and a life coach who works to find solutions for life's challenges that could hinder progress. During the 2024-2025 academic year, 1,583 unique students participated in the Excel Centers programs and a total of 7,418 classes were taken. During this time, 1,035 TANF clients and 177 SNAP clients for a total of 1,212 clients of both programs were served.

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is administered through 19 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across the state of Missouri to address poverty, its causes, and its effect on the local community. Each CAA determines programming based on an approved community needs assessment, which focuses on providing for specific needs and identifying barriers and/or gaps for supportive services. Through CSBG funding, eligible participants must be at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level and participate in various types of programs to improve employment, living conditions, and nutrition. CAAs have developed significant networks and partnerships within their regions that allow for maximizing capacity to assist people. CSBG funding helps to build and engage community resources designed to support families in need.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) is committed to assisting individuals leaving correctional centers prepare to enter the workforce. DOC provides educational services, career and technical education courses, and a Cognitive Behavioral Employment Adult course at 19 facilities and two transition centers. This includes additional employment related supports, such as career coaching, resume building, and interest profilers to prepare individuals with the cognitive aptitude to enter and maintain employment.

DOC also has a strong partnership with the MPWS who deploy team members into the facilities to meet with customers prior to their release back into Missouri communities. This partnership is a tremendous value and helps get customers enrolled in additional services and training allowing for a seamless entry into the Missouri workforce. In addition, this partnership has allowed for the creation and implementation of the 19 reentry centers. Reentry centers serve as a hub for clients/customers to meet with providers and find resources to assist with their transition into the community. These centers are equipped with technological resources as well as hard copy resources allowing clients to address their specific needs.

DOC has also hired 20 Employment Transition Specialists to assist clients in their readiness to enter the workforce upon release. These team members are responsible for hosting job/career fairs within the correctional centers, working with clients individually on a career path, setting up interviews, and providing career counseling/guidance. These positions are located at 18 facilities and 2 transition centers.

In PY 2025, OWD received funding for dedicated staff to deliver services in Missouri's corrections institutions to individuals nearing release. Staff members assist with building resumes, employability skills, interview skills, and searching for a job. In addition, the individual is introduced to a staff member in the Job Center where the individual will be released to continue services.

In addition to preparing individuals to enter the workforce, DOC has adopted a Fair Chance/Second Chance employer engagement strategy. This strategy includes assigning an Employment Transition Specialist to each of the 114 counties in Missouri and the City of St. Louis. This strategy will yield employers in each county of the state allowing for employment opportunities for everyone exiting the correctional centers. Currently, DOC has over 2,282 Fair/Second Chance employers committed to hiring individuals with criminal records and look to see the list continue to grow.

The Missouri Division of Employment Security contributes to the MPWS customer economic self-sufficiency through payment of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. The nature of the program, provision of services, and potential benefit payment places the division at the forefront in identifying workers who have recently become unemployed or underemployed. Unemployment claims are made via DES electronic unemployment compensation claim filing website, UInteract at <http://uinteract.labor.mo.gov>, or by phone to a DES Regional Claim Center. All individuals who file for UI services are automatically registered and receive information on available jobs that meet their skill set. Claimants are able to view a list of available jobs that match their job skills and geographic preferences each time they file a weekly request for payment of UI benefits.

The primary objective of the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) is to develop and support activities to increase employment and job training opportunities for veterans and eligible persons. The MPWS JVSG program administered by OWD has also evolved and grown partnerships. Veterans have unique skill sets that oftentimes can be difficult to translate to private sector jobs. Veterans are also individuals who often have barriers to employment, which must be addressed. The Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) have expanded their outreach efforts to include business, industry, and other community-based organizations to ensure veterans and their spouses are provided employment and training opportunities, as well as needed workforce services. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and Consolidated Position Staff (CODL) Specialists engage with service providers in their local community to:

- Maximize the number of individuals the service providers refer to the state's workforce development system, particularly those who are eligible for, in need of, and interested in individualized career services from a DVOP/CODL specialist.
- Enhance outcomes for participants whom the DVOP/CODL specialists refer to other providers.

- Strengthen community awareness of the array of services available through the workforce development system.

The goal of the DVOP and CODL outreach is to connect with community resource providers, inform them about the individualized career services available to eligible veterans/persons through the case management framework, and encourage referrals to the local Job Center. Missouri assigns CODL staff to maximize services to veterans. CODL staff conducts outreach to employers, community agencies, and veterans' organizations to share information. DVOP and CODL staff conduct outreach to Missouri probation and parole offices and collaborate with OWD re-entry specialists to work with justice-involved veterans and veterans who are scheduled for release from DOC facilities to assist them with their employment needs. DVOP and CODL staff provide itinerant services to individuals who have been screened for eligibility by non-JVSG staff at homeless shelters and at other locations frequented by homeless veterans.

Missouri provides individualized career services to targeted veterans and eligible persons in person and virtually. The provision of individualized career services will result in successful transition into civilian employment for separating service members, reintegration into the workforce for the homeless, and reduced recidivism for incarcerated veterans.

Missouri participates in mobilization and demobilization briefings for the National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers and their spouses. Missouri also collaborates with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), Veterans Commission, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Department of Corrections, Department of Mental Health, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and other public organizations to identify and refer veterans with employment barriers to the local job center for individualized career services with the goal of obtaining meaningful employment.

While these collaborative partnerships are already occurring, the MPWS realizes that to grow in effectively and efficiently serving its citizens, it needs to not only work within the existing partnerships but also expand its collaboration efforts. Therefore, it has evolved and expanded partnerships with many other entities. These include other state agencies, such as the Department of Transportation; Department of Corrections, including Probation and Parole; Department of Mental Health; Division of Youth Services; and the Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, MPWS now partners with other community agencies including United Way, area community rehabilitation programs, and the Missouri National Guard.

B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

The MPWS has significant strengths to carry out workforce development activities.

1. Gubernatorial and Legislative Support

When the WIOA State Plan was submitted, and under the leadership of Mike Parson, former Governor, the MPWS has had ongoing and significant support in serving Missourians. Mr. Parson declared workforce development as one of his priorities at the beginning of his tenure and continued to deliver on this commitment. These activities align with now Governor Kehoe's Workforce of the Future Challenge, with the charge of alignment of key workforce stakeholders, including K-12 schools, local businesses and industry, career and technical education programs, and higher education.

Executive Order 25-16, issued by Governor Kehoe on January 28, 2025, provided a springboard to highlight and enhance strengths in the MPWS, such as apprenticeships, career counseling, and employer engagement. A work group utilized the feedback from a CTE perceptions survey, as well as an analysis of current workforce development education opportunities in the state. This collaborative effort produced 12 specific recommendations that will undoubtedly improve CTE and workforce training opportunities for youth and adults. Through the Governor's Challenge, the MPWS will achieve greater alignment by addressing opportunities with collaborative solutions and capitalizing on current best practices to better meet the needs of jobseekers.

In 2023, the legislature passed House Bill 971, which makes Missouri an "Employment First" state. This legislation adopts the Employment First policy, which recognizes the underrepresentation of persons with disabilities in the workforce, ensures that high school students have equitable access to all programs, and ensures that all students with disabilities are exposed to careers and career pathways.

Employment First legislation also extended the 2019 Executive Order to establish Missouri as a Model Employer. This initiative focuses on agencies serving as that model for Missouri business by ensuring people with disabilities are part of the state workforce, providing mandatory disability awareness training for all employees and conducting a yearly survey to assess the state labor participation rate for individuals with disabilities.

On January 19, 2023, Executive Order 23-01 was signed to establish a Master Plan on Aging with an overarching goal that all Missourians, regardless of age or ability, will have access to person-centered programs and services necessary to help them age in their environment of choice in a safe and healthy manner. This Executive Order created an advisory council and tasked DHSS with the development of a plan by Dec. 31, 2025.

A Master Plan on Aging is a cross-sector, state-led strategic resource that can help transform the infrastructure and coordination of services for Missouri's rapidly aging population. The plan will build bridges across government agencies, facilitate collaboration with diverse stakeholders, promote equal access by all, raise awareness among policymakers and the public, establish statewide priorities, and incorporate an aging and disability lens across state priorities beyond traditional health care and community.

The Governor recommended, and the Missouri legislature also passed the P20W initiative, which established and continues to support a research and data center within the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development. P20W data systems securely and privately connect statewide information from (P) preschool/early childhood through K-12 education, postsecondary

education (Grade 20), the (W) workforce, and social and human services, enabling cross-sector data insights to help users evaluate policies and programs, spot trends, make data-informed decisions, and figure out what works in supporting successful transitions for Missourians along their education to workforce journeys.

Missouri has invested in education through the Missouri Fast Track, Missouri One Start, and MoExcels programs. Fast Track is a scholarship program which allows Missourians to receive training in high-demand areas largely taught at community colleges, technical schools, colleges, and universities.

Missouri One Start provides a tailored workforce strategy to address the unique needs of a business. Missouri One Start helps businesses of all sizes stay competitive by providing personalized recruitment assistance and resources to train and upskill new and existing employees. Its recruitment strategies and training programs are tailored to the specific workforce needs of the businesses it serves.

The MoExcels program is administered through the Missouri DHEWD. MoExcels funding facilitates development and expansion of employer-driven education and training programs and initiatives to substantially increase educational attainment. Funding recommended through MoExcels is available for a single fiscal year.

Reentry 2030 is a national initiative that aims to dramatically improve reentry success for people exiting prison and those under supervision. Missouri was the first state to sign on to this initiative which is supported by the governor's office and other State of Missouri Departments. Through Reentry 2030, these departments have made a commitment to better serve this population of Missourians.

Missouri has set a goal that by 2030, the Missouri Department of Corrections will expand collaborations and partnerships with public and private entities to connect incarcerated Missourians to employment and to prepare them to maintain their employment. With 100 percent of incarcerated Missourians receiving career services who need them, 85 percent of incarcerated Missourians are employed within 30 days of release, and 80 percent of formerly incarcerated Missourians maintain their employment for at least nine months after release.

To support this effort, a Reentry 2030 State Advisory Team was created. Each department director selected team members to represent their departments on this team. This allows for department commitments to be completed and for additional departmental resources to be afforded to incarcerated Missourians.

Adding to the commitment of assisting individuals with employment after release, the legislature approved funding for OWD staff to provide employment services in Missouri's corrections institutions for individuals prior to release. Services may include activities such as resume building, interview preparation, employability skills training, and career counseling. The individual is introduced to the job center in their community to continue services after release.

With legislative and gubernatorial support, the MPWS, through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), added the Workforce Diploma program in 2023. The chosen vendor,

Graduation Alliance, is a high school diploma-granting entity, with accreditation by Cognia, authorized to issue fully accredited high school diplomas recognized as Tier 1 diplomas by postsecondary institutions, employers, and the U.S. military. DESE ensures that Graduation Alliance's Adult Workforce Diploma Program provides a base level of education needed to engage in high-demand jobs in the state, along with an introduction to professional skills required to be successful in the workplace. Adult students with interest and aptitude for specific career technical programs are strongly encouraged to earn one or more Workforce Diplomas, many of which are aligned to the MPWS's high-demand careers.

2. Delivery of Services to Individuals with Barriers

Overall, data shows that Missouri is slightly above the national averages in populations for youth, youth with disabilities, adults with disabilities, civilian veterans, and those below federal poverty levels. Missouri demographics also show that a higher than average percentage of residents are white compared to national numbers. This data demonstrates the need to focus on serving populations with barriers, including people with disabilities, veterans, people below poverty level, and those with less than a high school diploma. By creating clear career pathways connected to the skills and education required by employers in the region, the MPWS is engaging and supporting individuals that may not be attached to workforce by creating opportunities for worker mobility in Missouri.

The Missouri Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning (OAWBL) has incorporated recruitment practices to include populations with barriers into its programming. In 2023, Missouri ranked 4th in the nation in inclusion of people with disabilities, 6th in serving female apprentices, and 7th in serving veterans. These rankings are a testament to the significant partnerships which have been cultivated.

DSS provides an entry point for individuals who face barriers in poverty. Three different programs, CSBG, SkillUP, and MWA, offer opportunities for individuals to enroll in employment and training programs and to receive wrap-around services. These programs have a list of supports offered through the programs and share additional resources in the communities. Participants typically have access to apply for programs with other funding sources to gain the supports to continue an employment and training program until employment and stable income is provided.

Missouri HB 971, the Employment First legislation, makes Missouri an "Employment First" state. Employment will be a clear option given to people with disabilities who are of working age. It requires that support agencies collaborate and promote opportunities for competitive integrated employment. The Act specifies all state agencies that provide employment-related services or support services to persons with disabilities are required to coordinate with other agencies, promote competitive integrated employment, and implement an Employment First policy when serving persons with disabilities.

In 2023, Missouri was selected to participate in a national initiative aimed at increasing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The National Expansion Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) grant focuses on the provision of technical assistance (TA). In 2023

Missouri focused on the development of a career pathway for benefits planning specialists who counsel those receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) regarding their ability to go to work. The Department of Mental Health (DMH), RSB, OWD, MVR, and the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council are the collaborators on this project.

In 2024 Missouri's participation in the NEON initiative included development of an MOU as part of the newly enacted Employment First Act. The Employment First Act requires the state agencies that provide employment-related services or support to people with disabilities to collaborate. The legislation requires that these relationships should be confirmed by a written memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by each state agency. Twelve Missouri agencies closely collaborated to develop the MOU.

In addition to the Employment First MOU, the NEON group's State as Model Employer SAME subcommittee worked on the SAME initiative. SAME is purposed to increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities to work in state government. In 2024 this included development of a survey to improve the accessibility of the MO Careers state employment application portal, working with ADA Coordinators and Recruitment/Hiring Managers, developing liaison relationships between state Human Resources and CRP's, and development of an implementation plan to help state government to become a model employer for other employers.

Missouri was once again selected as a core partner for the 2025 NEON initiative grant. The 2025 goals are being confirmed and may include a continuation of the finalization of the Employment First MOU, Employment First Policy Development, and the use of Apprenticeships, Internships, and possible Customized Employment as strategies in state government.

3. Effective Partnering and Collaboration among WIOA Partners

Communication is key for the MPWS. As workforce partners align employer skill and education needs with career pathways, services are braided and layered to assist individuals as they prepare to enter and advance in the workforce.

The strengths of Missouri's workforce development activities are based on the collaboration, cooperation, and coordination of the workforce system partners. At every cycle of four-year plan and two-year modification, core and combined partners work together to construct the plan. Each partner comes to the table ready to contribute making the MPWS a truly collaborative system. No decision is made on plan development or implementation without involving all partners. MPWS partners as a whole present the plan to the State Workforce Development Board. All partners participate in reviewing each local plan and plan modification to ensure their interests are represented and their participants have a voice.

The WIOA Steering Committee has also evolved during the past several years. First seen as an oversight committee for WIOA activities, the team is now the implementer of the MPWS services. This team assesses and analyzes the effectiveness of service delivery, including performance, and invites additional stakeholders to be part of the implementation.

Partners continue to hone methods for generating appropriate referrals between agencies by engaging in state and local discussions and utilizing an online directory of resources. Each partner offers unique strengths, and the collaboration leads to increased customer services through braiding of funding. This braiding allows customers, particularly those individuals with barriers, to receive additional wraparound services that may not be available through another partner and affords the customer more opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency through employment.

4. Delivery of Services to Employers

The MPWS places a high priority on services and listening to employers, as they are included as part of the plan goals and strategies. Collaboration among partners has strengthened this service in Missouri. While each agency has its own focus on employer engagement, partners have learned that working together can be a great asset for both the partner and the employer. Through this collaboration, the MPWS is able to tailor robust and comprehensive services to employers.

Outreach methods to employers continue to progress collaboratively outside the core and plan partners. The MPWS works closely with the Missouri Chamber and local chambers, the state and local chapters of the Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM), and employer industry groups such as Missouri Hospital Association, Missouri Association of Manufacturers, and Associated General Contractors. Additionally, partners are using the resources of the business majority members of both the state and local workforce boards not only as a resource to educate on employer needs, but also to act as a representative to other employers and share the benefits of accessing MPWS services.

Listening to employer needs and providing flexible options to Missouri's talent pipeline has been a key factor in the development of tools such as Missouri Job Ready Day One, which is an online training designed to provide soft skills for potential employees. Missouri also offers job fairs behind the walls at correctional facilities, hosts in-person job fairs and hiring events and participates in meetings with the Department of Economic Development to discuss the pipeline of workers available to employers wanting to expand or relocate to Missouri.

Finally, recognizing the need for a single point of contact approach, the MPWS has formed what are known as Nexus groups. These groups are comprised of core partners, additional state agencies, community rehabilitation providers, Centers for Independent Living, employers, educational institutions, and local chambers of commerce. They meet at the local level to share outreach strategies, provide employer education, and share job opportunities. These groups are effective in delivering quality and efficient services to employers. There are twelve (12) active Nexus groups statewide with three more in the planning phase.

In addition:

OWD's Job Centers create specialized recruitment fairs for employers and coordinates all marketing and logistics offering the employer an opportunity to connect with a pool of talented and trained individuals. OWD also conducts Rapid Response and layoff aversion activities. OWD collaborates with the other MPWS partners to ensure the best provision of services.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) Community Engagement Team meets with employers from around the state listening to opportunities and challenges. Depending on the needs of the business, recommendations are made to state and partner employment and training programs. These types of recommendations include recruiting from pools of talent that may have been overlooked in the past, such as clients who are justice involved or clients who have completed SkillUP trainings. Programs like JAG and registered apprenticeships that can help to grow their workforce pipeline are explained and encouraged. Business specialists from core, combined plan, and required partners participate in Community Engagement Team initiatives.

While the MPWS is proud of its strengths, it recognizes that there is always room for improvement and growth. MPWS is committed to addressing the following challenges in the workforce system.

1. Data Integration

Though Missouri has made progress in the sharing of data, true data integration will be an ongoing process. Each partner operates independent systems that do not necessarily have the capability to communicate with each other. The P20W initiative encouraged all departments to explore options to better share and integrate data in support of workforce development initiatives. This has helped spur more discussion and pilot projects around these issues. With the 2023 passing of the Missouri P20W longitudinal data system initiative, data sharing has already improved among partners. Progress has been made in linking K-12 to postsecondary and workforce data, as well as integrating new data on registered apprenticeship and from the public workforce system.

2. Statewide Awareness of Services Available for Jobseekers and Employers

Each MPWS partner could often say they are the “best kept secret” in Missouri. While the partners have developed a collective brand, the MPWS is striving to educate community partners and educators to drive outreach of services throughout the state and reach all those who could potentially access services. This is addressed by broadening the scope of partnerships, targeted outreach activities, and utilizing technology to expand outreach.

3. Alignment of Practices, Policies and Processes

Much focus in past WIOA planning has been on strengthening the partnership among core, combined state plan and required partners. However, it is clear that the MPWS expands well beyond this group into other state agencies and many stakeholders, including institutions of higher education, local extension offices, business associations, community service providers, local and state chambers of commerce, Department of Labor Apprenticeship representatives and local school districts. Additionally, extensive partner collaboration has exposed siloes and service overlap, particularly at the state agency level. In turn, these entities are required to do their own strategic planning and develop individual state plans.

Moving forward, the MPWS will utilize the WIOA combined state plan to align practices and processes across agencies and with other partners, such as the State Workforce Development Board. This means having intentional discussions to share workforce activities and identify the commonalities so that the workforce system is broadened and the vision is consistent.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

Missouri's collaboration among its partners strengthens its capacity to provide the workforce activities previously identified in (A) above. The state has embraced the vision behind WIOA by including the Department of Social Services as a combined partner along with the integration driven by the Office of Workforce Development, Unemployment Insurance, Adult Education, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind. Additional alignment opportunities between the MPWS and CTE programs will continue as we partner to meet the specific needs of employers. While each partner analyzes their own capacity to provide workforce and training services for jobseekers and employers, the MPWS utilizes its capacity as a whole to provide these services.

The COVID 19 pandemic and funding challenges have necessitated new approaches for reaching jobseekers and employers. Missouri now utilizes web platforms such as Zoom, TEAMS, and WebEx to connect with customers who choose not to access a physical location for services. Mobile applications and software with virtual assistance also have improved the efficiency in service access. Finally, jobseekers now have access to statewide virtual learning platforms for online classes.

Based on the U.S. Census data, over 241,000 Missouri adults age 25 and older do not have a high school diploma or equivalent. The MPWS supports at least 12,000 students annually through 28 AEL service providers, most of whom have a waiting list. Using innovations in service delivery through the AEL providers, the MPWS has increased adult education enrollment from 2021's COVID-impacted participation through 2024 by 53 percent and projects those numbers to continue to grow. Partners work with students to remove barriers by providing accommodations for disabilities, supportive services, and wages to attend adult education classes, contributing to a more than 82 percent adult student persistence rate.

These adult students need more than primary and secondary education; they need workforce readiness, digital literacy, and occupational training. Using Local Workforce Development Plans and labor market research analysis, local AEL service providers develop adult learning objectives with employers and occupational skills trainers. Local AEL programs embed essential workforce skills (a.k.a. soft skills) in all their curricula and utilize contextualized instruction. Specialized transition staff works with employers to place students in jobs with sustainable wages. The MPWS promotes co-enrollment, giving students additional resources for supportive services, resume polishing, and interview skills.

Throughout its 23 comprehensive job centers, as well as affiliate and specialized centers, OWD provides a robust menu of vital re-employment services, including access to skill-building training, career connections for jobseekers, and human resources assistance for businesses. These services are provided through the statewide network of job centers and the jobs.mo.gov web portal.

In PY2024 OWD provided over 532,000 services to 70,000 distinct individuals in Missouri. This resulted in just over 4,400 individuals receiving additional training and employment services through WIOA service providers. Over 184,000 services were also provided to Missouri employers.

With the assistance of trained professional staff, job centers streamline customer flow to provide an expanded offering of valuable career assistance services, including specialized workshops, skills assessments, and resume writing assistance. These services equip the state's workforce with the training and skills needed by employers to compete in the 21st century economy. Job centers offer jobseekers the use of supportive equipment such as computers, telephones, fax machines, and copiers. Businesses use job centers to seek or interview potential employees, test applicants' occupational skills, and gain access to labor market information.

OWD also provides several innovative, targeted skill-building programs, such as specialized job search assistance for veterans, multiple apprenticeship projects, a nationally recognized On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program, ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate, as well as the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. This program targets claimants who are most likely to exhaust their UI benefits and recipients of unemployment compensation for ex-service members (UCX) and requires them to report to their local job centers to receive specialized reemployment services and a UI eligibility assessment. In PY2024, over 18,000 jobseekers received services through the RESEA program demonstrating its capacity to serve thousands of Missourians.

The JVSG program has 27.5 positions for staff, representing the positions of Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER), The Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), and the Consolidated DVOP LVER (CODL). These positions are strategically placed in job centers, including the affiliate job center located on Fort Leonard Wood Army Installation, to ensure statewide coverage in both urban and rural areas.

The Missouri DOC currently operates 19 correctional centers throughout the state, housing an incarcerated population of nearly 24,000, with a little almost 22,000 being male and a nearly 2,000 being female. In addition to the incarcerated population, Missouri Probation and Parole supervises approximately 53,000 Missourians in the more than 33 Probation and Parole Districts and 22 satellites. Probation and Parole also operated two transition centers (Kansas City and St. Louis) and six community supervision centers. DOC will be adding an additional Community Supervision Center in the Southwest Missouri region of the state in the coming years.

The Department of Social Services (DSS), Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives (OWCI) administers employment and training programs with the unit's purpose to focus on clients, programs, outcomes, cross-division/cross-department initiatives, and develop sustainable programs that address the needs of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, Temporary Assistance (TA) recipients, Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) recipients, and other low-income persons. As of May 2025, there are 322,265 SNAP households, 4,986 TA (cash benefit) households, and over 97,000 CSBG households. There are individuals that may choose not to participate due to disability or other circumstances within both of these populations.

OWCI manages a GovDelivery email system with over 169,000 subscribers so Missouri employers, training providers, and community resources can advertise their positions and services at no cost.

OWCI shares results of open and click rates with the organization that makes the request. The organization reports attendance, interest, or enrollment numbers shortly after the advertisement. The program has been well-received and appreciated as it has assisted in increasing numbers at hiring events, increasing enrollments, and educating the general public about a local service. In CY2024, OWCI sent 24.7 million emails with an average 22 percent open rate. Another service OWCI offers is text messages to SNAP households who may qualify for SkillUP. OWCI sent 290,176 text messages for events. The text messages are sent to households who have opted in to receive DSS communication and are identified by the information on their active case. The text messages target messaging to specific counties, cities, or zip codes on regional events.

OWCI attempts to reach individuals in the community where they reside to educate them on resources and opportunities. OWCI currently visits and attends resource fairs at about half of the state correctional facilities and the federal medical correctional facility where benefits are discussed, and soon-to-be released individuals can apply for SNAP upon their release. This resulted in OWCI educating 1,380 individuals about employment and training programs in their communities and helped 1,012 individuals receive SNAP benefits upon release.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation's (MVR) 23 offices provide services in all counties across the state to assist individuals with disabilities achieve successful employment outcomes. With close to 300 vocational rehabilitation counselors, support and administrative staff statewide, MVR maximizes coverage in metropolitan, urban, and rural areas. MVR has the capacity to serve all types of disabilities including specialized populations such as deaf/hard of hearing, individuals with autism spectrum disorders, and traumatic brain injuries. Annually, counselors work with more than 39,000 individuals with an average daily count greater than 7,600. MVR participates in thirteen Nexus groups across the state. Nexus groups are a collaboration of WIOA partners with the goal of expanding employment opportunities for people with barriers to employment through the development of business partnerships. MVR expands its range of services through its work with Centers for Independent Living (CILs). MVR partners with 21 CILs located throughout Missouri sharing referrals and providing services to mutual clientele.

MVR is contracting with the University of Missouri (MU), College of Education, to assist with the provision of pre-employment transition services. There are 66 transition specialists located across the state, who collaborate with local education agencies and MVR to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. With the MU specialists, MVR can reach students in all school districts and charter schools.

MVR offers a paid six-week summer work experience program for students with disabilities in coordination with community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), local school districts and employers. This has been a successful program growing annually extending its reach across the state. In the past year, 1,817 students with disabilities, over 400 employment sites, and more than 200 schools participated.

MVR has the capacity to provide additional services through new pilots in several areas such as customized employment, progressive employment, and peer mentoring for students with

disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems and homeless and housing insecure youth. Through these pilots, MVR is collaborating with numerous partners such as Department of Mental Health, Department of Social Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, CILs, rehabilitation service providers, University of Missouri, Missouri State University, OWD, and employers. Braiding services through these collaborations opens opportunities to reach more Missourians with disabilities desiring to work.

Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind's (RSB) six district offices include a total of 95 staff comprised of rehabilitation counselors, teachers, mobility specialists, children's specialists, and support and administrative staff delivering services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. RSB takes a team approach based on the unique barriers and needs of the individual. Concentration in the area of serving blind and visually impaired individuals affords RSB the capacity to provide individualized services and resources to its statewide customer base.

RSB's PY 2021 client census was 1,248 clients. RSB anticipates increasing the client census to 1,500 by the end of PY 2024. In 2022, RSB implemented the Client Recruitment Team. The CRT's charge is to increase RSB's overall client census. The CRT systematically develops further opportunities for outreach in a variety of venues, some of which may not have been traditional "case finding" areas. The team is comprised of staff from all across RSB's geographic locations. It also takes advantage of the knowledge base and perspectives from various position classes.

RSB continues to build up its Job Development Unit. The unit now consists of four dedicated Job Development Specialists (JDS) positions and an Employment Services Coordinator. This allows RSB to dedicate staff to assist clients in job search and job development activities. JDS staff also work with local employers by connecting them with available jobseekers with disabilities.

In addition, RSB staff have participated in continuing education and leadership development courses. These courses further career pathways of RSB staff by providing for much needed specialization training in hard-to-find specialty areas such as Orientation and Mobility Certification.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

1. VISION

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment⁸ and other populations.⁹

(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

[8] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[9] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Using the tables provided within each Core Program section, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

4. ASSESSMENT

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment, which may include evaluation findings, and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

Missouri's WIOA partners will make economic self-sufficiency attainable for customers through high-quality services and a fully integrated workforce system.

MPWS partners have developed five goals to achieve Missouri's vision:

1. Overcome employment barriers

By design, Missouri agencies are well equipped to assist individuals with barriers. WIOA core partners opted to write a combined state plan to specifically include TANF and SNAP programs, as well as CSBG. This move was meant to leverage partnerships with these agencies and ensure access to serve individuals with disabilities, those who are homeless, foster care youth, single parents, those with low-income, displaced homemakers, as well as those who are exhausting their TANF benefits within two years. OWD implements priority of service, which prioritizes recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals as well as those who are basic skill deficient (including English language learners) for WIOA funding. Additionally, OWD provides priority of service for veterans and their eligible spouses for job training programs, including WIOA funds. Through strategic planning and purposeful engagement with community resources, the MPWS can expand and enhance the resources available to serve this integral workforce pipeline.

2. Maximize efficiency and access to services

Missouri endeavors to eliminate duplication of effort and values cost effective services. Missouri recognizes there will always be a need for additional resources and acknowledges the importance of providing efficient and effective services. Partner agencies are motivated to provide access to quality services for the greatest number of customers. As agencies work to align their strategies and processes, this will enhance the efficiency of the MPWS.

3. Develop career pathways

Workforce customers often have needs that require multiple supports to overcome barriers and develop skills necessary to enter and excel in the job market. Missouri maintains a network of support services for customers to use, as and when needed, to aid them in achieving their employment goals. This network of support services forms the foundation of Missouri's approach to career pathways. By utilizing the labor market information which identifies the Now, Next, and Later occupations, the MPWS can focus on the development of career pathways, which will truly benefit Missouri's workforce and employers. The MPWS learns about careers in order to determine opportunities for the workforce customers, then communicates to the customer the different types of jobs that have worker mobility help build the future for the next and later occupations. This is done through education of short-term certificates that can lead into a high demand field where employers are offering professional development and tuition reimbursement to stack on credentials or continue education.

4. Place a strong emphasis on employment retention

Missouri leverages partner services to focus not only on jobseekers returning to work but also empowering them with the knowledge and skills to maintain successful employment. It is unlikely that entry-level positions yield enough income for an individual to become self-sufficient. Research indicates that on-going education and training supports greater job satisfaction and employee retention. In addition, up-skilling while employed can improve employees' opportunities for career advancement. Missouri is committed to providing education, training, and resources to gain stackable credentials and skills that will help customers retain employment and advance within their chosen profession. Partnerships with other agencies, such as DED who provide employment retention programs will contribute to the success of this goal.

5. Engage employers to meet their needs

The MPWS is employer driven; therefore, customers must be prepared to respond to the existing job market and future economic conditions. Matching skilled labor to employer needs promotes self-sufficiency of the state's workforce and spurs economic growth. The state listens to the needs of current employers and develops engagement opportunities with new businesses. By engaging beyond the core, state plan and required partners, the MPWS can increase access to new resources and services, which will further enhance the employer experience.

Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of states and local workforce development areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system's six core programs. The following indicators are used to measure the core programs' performance:

1. Employment Rate –Second quarter after exit: The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd quarter after program exit.
2. Employment Rate –Fourth quarter after exit: The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the 4th quarter after program exit.
3. Median Earnings –Second quarter after exit: The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after program exit.
4. Credential Attainment: The percentage of participants in an education or training program (excluding on-the-job training and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential/certificate during the program or within one year after exit or attain a diploma or equivalent from a secondary education program while in the program or within one year of exit and who are employed or enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit.
5. Measurable Skill Gains: The percentage of participants, who during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, toward such a credential or employment.
6. Effectiveness in serving employers: This measure gauges MPWS' effectiveness in meeting the workforce needs of employers. Retention with the Same Employer, the percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program who were employed by the same employer in the second and fourth quarters after exit, will be used as the measure of this indicator.

Refer to Appendix I for expected levels of performance based on primary indicators of performance. All partners' federally funded programs are measured in the same way, and a penalty could be applied to WIOA discretionary funds for repeated missed performance targets. This creates a shared accountability for shared customers and their outcomes.

The core and combined state plan partners are involved in assessing the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system as well as determining how to best use the results in pursuit of continuous improvement. The assessment includes the utilization of data to identify the efficacy of initiatives implemented to meet the goals, a review of governmental structure and policies, evaluation of interagency partnerships and an investment in shared technology.

Missouri's goal for assessment is to ensure a statewide demand-driven workforce system. The state employs numerous strategies to assess the MPWS's effectiveness in achieving its vision and goals. The WIOA Steering Committee is composed of representatives from each core and combined state plan partner. The question of how effective the MPWS is in delivering services to meet Missouri's vision and goals is the force that drives the committee's meeting agendas. The question keeps the committee on track and assists in determining whether the MPWS is effectively integrating to provide high-quality services in order to make economic self-sufficiency attainable for its customers.

The WIOA Steering Committee is working toward a quarterly assessment of progress by each agency on common performance indicators along with an assessment of combined partners' progress on their goals. Assessment includes the utilization of data to identify the efficacy of initiatives implemented to meet the goals, a review of governmental structure and policies, evaluation of interagency partnerships, and an investment in shared technology.

Each partner assesses its own effectiveness through different methods of feedback collection. Missouri uses assessment results to drive continuous improvement efforts. The Steering Committee identifies deficit areas and uses ad hoc WIOA subcommittees to address the issues.

C. STATE STRATEGY

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23)

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2)

MPWS partners have analyzed the effectiveness of services and developed the following strategies to meet its goals, fulfill its vision, and to address identified challenges:

1. Provide leadership and guidance to implement state plan goals and support the vision

It is clear that strong, consistent, and collaborative leadership is essential to effectively delivering services within the MPWS. Oversight of the state plan implementation is conducted through the WIOA Steering Committee. This committee is comprised of agency decision-makers and influencers to support and carry out the goals for the vision. This includes ensuring programs, resources, and staff are in place to serve those with barriers to employment, services are easily accessible statewide, and jobseekers are able to establish clear career pathways. Additionally, these leaders ensure that workforce challenges are identified and addressed, particularly in collaborating to integrate and align services system-wide. Finally, the committee works to ensure employers are educated, provided feedback, and given the resources necessary to hire and retain employees.

The Steering Committee is also responsible for assessing the overall performance of the MPWS and analyzing the effectiveness of service delivery. Further, the team provides leadership to ensure that any identified strengths can be scaled across other partners and programs and that processes can be put in place to fill any service gaps for both jobseekers and employers.

2. Develop partnerships with employers to provide resources for engagement with an emphasis on employee retention

Providing quality and valued services to employers is a critical part of growing Missouri's workforce. This includes first listening to employer needs and positioning the MPWS to provide services to meet those needs. It also includes educating employers about the workforce, sharing labor market trends, identifying local talent pipelines, updating job postings and job descriptions to harvest the best talent, and also dispelling stereotypical myths about barrier groups, including those collecting TANF and SNAP benefits and persons with disabilities. Finally, the MPWS has a responsibility to educate employers on diverse options to fill their talent pipeline, including work-based learning opportunities such as on-the-job training and registered apprenticeships.

Collaboration among MPWS partners in engaging employers also reduces duplication of outreach efforts and provides a well-rounded and solid delivery of services.

3. Streamline efforts to share data

The MPWS acknowledges the need but also the complexity in sharing data across agencies. Sharing data allows for reducing or eliminating duplication of services to jobseekers and identifies underserved groups, which can be targeted for outreach to access workforce services.

In past years, strides have been made in Missouri with regard to data sharing, notably in 2023 with the passing of support to implement the P20W longitudinal data system. A dedicated team supports the project and has accelerated the work, and an interagency Data Governance Committee (DGC) and Executive Advisory Committee comprised of Cabinet leaders each meet regularly to support and prioritize the work. An inaugural data governance framework has been adopted by the DGC, and P20W staff are working with legal counsel to renew a longstanding interagency data sharing agreement, which will also enable additional data integration.

While these efforts are promising, Missouri realizes a fully integrated data system is a shared vision that may take years to achieve. Therefore, the MPWS has identified this as a strategy to ensure its progress is continually evaluated.

4. Implement policies and practices for service design and delivery

Quality service delivery to customers is critical. Identifying and implementing policies and practices for referrals, customer flow, co-enrollment, cross training needs of staff, and braiding of services are all key in ensuring that jobseekers are being served.

In addition, current policies and practices must be regularly analyzed and evaluated to ensure that the services provided truly meet the needs of employers and jobseekers. By implementing the right services to the customer and aligning the vision, goals, and strategies statewide, the MPWS can

positively impact services provided to jobseekers and enhance the strategic development of sector strategies and career pathways to benefit both jobseekers and employers.

5. Target best practices and implement processes to impact services for youth

Youth, particularly those with barriers to employment, continue to be an underserved population through the MPWS. In Missouri schools, over 34,000 students are estimated to be experiencing some form of homelessness over the course of a school year. In addition, in Missouri there are more than 12,000 kids in foster care who will need services while in care or after leaving the care. This includes placement settings such as temporary care with relatives, traditional foster families with strangers, and group residential homes. Over 118,000 children enrolled in Missouri schools have been identified as having a disability. This data tells us that the MPWS has a lot of work to do in connecting with and engaging with this population.

A recent survey conducted by the University of Missouri Extension indicated that more than 1 in 5 Missouri high school graduates elect to directly enter the labor force upon graduation. Partners are uniquely positioned to address this need by pooling resources and sharing best practices in serving youth. Expanding the MPWS network to include entities serving this population is important in growing youth access to service delivery and in providing talent for employers. Key services such as high school career exploration and education on various postsecondary options to youth, including college, career and technical education, or registered apprenticeships are needed to engage youth as they enter the workforce.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision-making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) assists the governor in carrying out required WIOA functions by taking a leadership role involving employers, representatives of workforce, WIOA partner agencies, and community-based organizations. They strive to ensure that Missouri's one-stop system is customer driven and responsive to WIOA section 101 (d).

The SWDB utilizes operational structures and decision-making processes that contribute to successful implementation of its functions under WIOA 101(d). Operational structures of the board provide that the purposes and powers of the board shall be consistent with WIOA P.L 113-128 and Section 620.511 et seq., RSMO. The operational structure of the SWDB and its meetings allows it to

serve as a convener of state, regional, and local workforce system partners. SWDB meetings are held four times each year and subcommittees are authorized to assist with policy and programmatic issues as necessary to comply with WIOA section 101. SWDB by-laws govern details regarding board purpose, powers, scope of authority, and meeting operational structure.

Board meeting topics typically center on items that are relevant to all partners contained in the state's WIOA plan. Board meeting agendas are developed based on requests and actions of all board members, WIOA partner organizations, and state leadership officials. Agendas are finalized by the Board Chair. The operational structure of the board facilitates informed decisions and actions by board members. The structure of each board meeting encourages active participation of each member in the business of the board and in its role to help integrate and align a more effective job-driven workforce system that strengthens connections between education and the career preparation system.

Board member discussions and actions are based on each member's active participation in the business of the board and most importantly, as a result of receiving regular reports at meetings about system performance, fiscal matters, alignment efforts, policy recommendations, subcommittee briefings, strategies to promote career pathways, apprenticeships, and continuous improvement efforts. In addition, opportunity is provided at each meeting to hear from local WDB officials, the public, and others in attendance.

To ensure that the board remains flexible and can pivot to quickly address important policy or other matters that develop between formal full board meetings, additional meetings can be held. Board members take a broad and strategic view when conducting WIOA meetings. This results in processes and activities that allow for inclusion of necessary perspectives in carrying out SWDB functions and decision-making activities.

2. Implementation of State Strategy

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

Integration of Services to Better Serve Customers

Missouri's goal is to have an efficient and effective network, which allows both jobseekers and businesses access to all of the needed services in the state workforce system regardless of their agency access point. This supports the overall state strategy to implement policies and practices for service design and delivery. The MPWS continues working together to improve referral processes and ensure seamless service delivery throughout the workforce system:

Capitalizing on the governor's priority of creating the workforce of the future, the MPWS is utilizing partnerships to expand the integration of education and occupational training programs. AEL focused resources on developing IET opportunities throughout the state. By offering AEL, workplace readiness, and occupational training contextually and concurrently, IET programming effectively addresses the MPWS strategies to utilize, foster, and generate partnerships that develop career pathways for participants. The AEL 2023-2028 Strategic Plan for IET provides a framework to expand workforce literacy and occupational training opportunities through local AEL programs for adult learners. The Strategic Plan connects the MPWS combined task of creating sector strategies with IET programming through partnerships.

To address the specific needs of Missouri's citizens, local workforce regions and AEL service providers customize partnership activities. Programs co-locate in partner facilities where possible and in-person referrals occur throughout the state. Local AEL service providers must expose all students to Missouri Job Center services at orientation and record referrals in the statewide AEL data system. To address duplication of services, the MPWS relies on AEL's experience with delivering assessments. Job Center and AEL local program staff share assessments such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and WorkKeys. In many cases, MPWS partner staff also serve as AEL instructors. Multiple local programs provide virtual access to job center services within their AEL location. This year, the MPWS facilitated one-on-one conversations between local WDBs, job center staff, and AEL career advisors to improve referral procedures on a local level.

The MPWS sees a growing population needing English language proficiency and aims to serve through collaborating with local WDBs to address employer, community, and student needs through evolving IET offerings. Providers assess students before occupational training to ensure aptitude and interest. Through AEL, the MPWS facilitates connections to local refugee support organizations for supportive service assistance such as transportation, childcare, translation services, and cultural understanding. In addition, AEL providers focus on digital literacy for all students to support workplace readiness and future learning. Capitalizing on partnerships led to a quarterly median earnings value for Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE) participants in 2024-2025 of \$8,320, much higher than the adult basic education programs. Of the 928 IELCE students, 705 took a post-test during that period, and 533 (75.6 percent) students attained academic gain. The MPWS utilizes these remarkable outcomes to introduce English language students to Missouri's workforce.

In addition:

- OWD has developed an overarching co-enrollment policy for its stakeholders. Additionally, each local workforce region is required to include its own written referral policy in its local plans.
- DOLIR makes all Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant referrals to OWD, who in turn pre-registers claimants for services.
- All participants in the RESEA program are co-enrolled into Wagner-Peyser services.
- OWD staff provides meaningful assistance to each UI claimant to provide information about their claim process and to educate them on job center and partner services.

- OWD and AEL collaborate to provide an exciting opportunity for co-enrolled WIOA youth to earn a paycheck while pursuing their high school equivalency and gaining workplace readiness. This opportunity addresses both immediate and long-term career needs. The MPWS allows local flexibility for state regions to align programming with needs and available resources.
- MVR's Progressive Employment Program requires co-enrollment into WIOA services for all of their participants.
- The DSS OWCI employment and training programs require an assessment and employability plan with steps to self-sufficiency, which is monitored for compliance on a regular basis.
- The DSS OWCI programs utilize OWD's case management system, MoJobs, for the SkillUP program, which allows job center and local WDB staff to have a "full picture" of client services.
- The DSS OWCI regularly attends partner events to coordinate and explain the available employment and training programs and other wrap-around services offered through DSS such as SNAP, Cash Assistance, childcare, the Emergency Food Assistance Program, Domestic Violence Shelters and Services, and CSBG services.
- Local AEL service providers must employ a designated staff person as their student advocate or transition specialist. The MPWS utilizes these specialized team members to explore all relevant partner services for each participant as well as postsecondary training and employment goals. AEL class sites have direct access points to OWD's case management system, MoJobs, through designated computer stations on site.
- MVR is actively participating with all local WDBs through disability subcommittees and working as a disability employment resource.
- RSB assisted in the implementation of new accessibility software and hardware in job centers to ensure access for all jobseekers.
- RSB participates at the local WDB meetings and provides representation on the disability subcommittees and Nexus business/employment meetings.
- The JVSG Program's primary activities are designed to remove barriers to employment in addition to standard Wagner Peyser activities. These activities include assessing the qualified individual to determine the needs to be addressed, creating a plan of action on how to address those needs, referrals to partnering agencies and programs for support, and continuous follow up to ensure the individual is successful. Services are provided one on one, either in person or virtually, and can either be accessed at the job centers, or if a transportation barrier exists, the staff can travel to where the qualified individual is located. Referrals and co-enrollments to programs such as WIOA for financial and training supportive services, Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Readiness and Employment for education and certification opportunities to improve employment prospects, and Homeless Veteran Reintegration Programs for individuals that are homeless or at risk of homelessness are critical to the success of the program.

Strengthen Career Pathways

The MPWS continues to explore new and flexible ways to provide opportunities for career pathways and worker mobility. This not only strengthens services for jobseekers, including youth, but also enhances the services to employers and assists in recruitment and retention. Programs, such as registered apprenticeships and work-based learning, customized and supported employment, and short-term, industry-focused credential training are high-focus areas in Missouri. Employing these new sector strategies is intended to provide more opportunities for jobseekers to enter the market sooner and with the right preparation needed for the employer.

Education and training are paths to better careers by connecting and reconnecting individuals to the workforce. There may be customers who need concurrent and, in some cases, consecutive sessions of education and skill attainment with employment. Missouri advises and encourages customers to manage their own careers with information on what services are possible. Missouri also offers multiple entry and exit points for customers so they can access additional education, training, skills, and employment until they reach a self-sufficient career.

All partners are committed to supporting the efforts of the other partners by ensuring that their services are available to the referred participants. It is agreed that once an individual is on a career pathway, it is the responsibility of all partners to contribute as appropriate to the participant's success along the pathway.

Missouri's examples include:

- The MPWS supports the expansion of Integrated Education and Training (IET) for AEL service providers. The state AEL office and multiple local programs participated in IET Design Camps and developed a strategic plan with targeted technical assistance. This opportunity affords those programs access to current professional development for their staff. These efforts are part of a push to expand IET opportunities for citizens the MPWS serves.
- OWD programs are developing new initiatives to expand apprenticeship opportunities for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth such as new contracts with labor organizations and local employers, as well as other state agencies.
- OWD has piloted a program, Career Opportunities and Training for Youth (COTY) to connect youth to career exploration, employability skills, and paid work-based learning experiences while in high school. School counselors identify students not planning to pursue post-secondary education/training to connect with the program to determine eligibility.
- In addition to training services, OWD, MVR, OWCI, and RSB partners have work-based learning programs such as on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and work experience, which offer customers the opportunity to combine education, training, and employment services. MVR and RSB support career pathways by providing a variety of services to students, youth, and adults with disabilities. Additional services may include assistive technology, case management, and post-employment support to provide job retention. OWCI contracts with job centers to provide work-based learning for youth 16 to 24.
- MPWS AEL providers use Missouri Connections for student career development. Funded by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, this comprehensive online career development and planning program is at no cost to all Missouri citizens. To assist with

specific career pathway goals identified through Missouri Connections, local AEL programs rely on MPWS partners who assist students in finding job opportunities, apprenticeships, and postsecondary tuition assistance.

- Among Missouri's most common barriers to developing a career pathway is the lack of a high school diploma, basic skills, literacy deficiency, and the lack of English language skills. The MPWS allows individuals to acquire basic skills through AEL providers, which are necessary to function in today's society. Classrooms utilize both traditional and modernized instruction delivered in conjunction with workplace readiness, training, and retraining programs.
- TANF, SNAP, CSBG, RSB, MVR, and OWD partners provide supportive services that assist workforce customers with overcoming barriers to begin career pathways.
- TANF funds allow the OWD partners to provide subsidized employment to youth between the ages of 14 to 24 that are at or below the 185 percent poverty level.
- The DSS OWCI offers customers access to computers in their local offices to complete job searches using the workforce site, jobs.mo.gov. For TA (cash assistance) recipients and Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents, this activity is counted toward meeting their employment and training monthly hour requirements.
- SkillUP is offered by the local WDBs, which receive referrals from OWCI when a household indicates interest during a SNAP interview and job center staff who conduct Wagner-Peyser activities.
- The DSS OWCI requires an assessment and employability plan, with steps to self-sufficiency. This is monitored for compliance on a regular basis.
- The DSS OWCI Program administers the Jobs for America's Graduates Program, which focuses on students with barriers to graduating high school and entering postsecondary school, the military, and employment. This program is a high school elective. High school staff are aware of the SkillUP program for referrals that allow for continued wrap-around services and short-term training funding for eligible students.
- The Excel Centers offer the ability to gain high school diplomas and industry certificates. Clients who are also enrolled in SkillUP or Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) receive supportive services and case management from their case manager.

Model Best Practices through Strong Collaborative Leadership

To ensure that MPWS provides leadership and guidance to implement state plan goals and support the vision, each core partner has representation at a quarterly WIOA Steering Committee meeting. These meetings are utilized to do the following:

- Review quarterly performance for common measures and combined plan partner data to assess the effectiveness of service delivery
- Review each state strategy to perform an analysis of the coverage and appropriateness of services and identify any gaps
- Utilize meeting time to invite partners outside the state plan to ensure that there is effective delivery of workforce services

- Set priorities for implementation of the State Plan, form strategies for performance and action plans

B. Alignment with Activities Outside the Plan

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Through WIOA implementation, the MPWS has recognized the criticality of including additional partners to scale out best practices and to ensure that all jobseekers, particularly those under-served populations and those disconnected from the workforce, are able to access needed services for success. Additionally, collaboration, while important at the state level, truly needs to be implemented at the local level where jobseekers and employers are being served. This supports the MPWS strategies to implement policies and processes for service design and delivery and provide better services for employers.

The WIOA State Plan is the driving document for the MPWS activities. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the WIOA partners to share and align the plan with other plans, which include Missouri initiatives. This includes the Apprenticeship Missouri Five-year plan, the State Board strategic plan, and individual state plans constructed by partner agencies. The Steering Committee is the team that helps to identify and align these strategic planning processes as well as ensures it supports the vision of the governor.

At the state level, Missouri participates in several issue-specific, national cohorts. These include topics on co-enrollment, employer engagement data, and disability services. This gives Missouri the opportunity to showcase strong partnerships and work closer together on specific projects, share outcomes, and apply knowledge gained from cohorts at the local levels.

In addition:

- Apprenticeship Missouri has partnered with other state agencies, including the Department of Corrections (DOC), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHSS) to develop Registered Apprenticeships specifically to expand the state workforce. These partnerships have also spawned additional apprenticeships designed to address areas with significant workforce shortages, including a career-pathway oriented teacher apprenticeship aimed at paraprofessionals and other incumbent staff at DESE, and a child development associate apprenticeship to address the shortage of childcare workers. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) has developed a registered apprenticeship program solely aligned to their maintenance worker series of two levels, each of which takes two years to complete. The progression of skills that the apprentice will need to complete within the program aligns directly with the needs of the expectations and tasks of the MODOT employee. As of September 2023, MODOT has 250 maintenance worker

apprentices. In 2023, OWD implemented an internal apprenticeship program for front line staff. This unique approach to the “earn while you learn” model within OWD will reduce turnover, enhance skill development, and allow staff to gain a credential for their career pathway within workforce development.

- The MPWS partners collaborate with the Department of Economic Development (DED) to deliver services to employers who are expanding or relocating to Missouri by offering them a collaborative talent pipeline network. Additionally, DED is taking an active role in working with partners to develop and implement the 2024 combined plan, as well as DED’s state plan.
- The MPWS partners with the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Developments’ Postsecondary Policy team to create new pathways and opportunities for educational attainment. This “no wrong path” initiative includes significant changes and alignment for the Eligible Training Provider System and an education initiative for MPWS participants focused on financial aid programs as well as partner funding opportunities, such as WIOA and SkillUP.
- DOC coordinates with the MPWS through a client-based approach that includes career and technical education programs to develop new career pathways for justice-involved individuals.
- Missouri consistently explores avenues to collaborate on carrying out respective partner programs. MVR, RSB, and OWD all participate in the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) technical assistance grant. In Missouri, this grant focuses on the development of a tiered system for benefits planning.
- Missouri state agencies come together on a monthly basis to collaborate on hiring for state employees. This includes agency presence at career fairs, community events, and local job centers. In addition, this group also addresses and promotes state initiatives such as Reentry 2030, Missouri as a Model Employer, and other similar programs. For example, Office of Administration, which coordinates some state recruiting efforts, is examining background check policies and determining what rules/legislation may need to be changed to ensure Reentry 2030 success.
- The JVSG LVER and CODL staff participate on business teams as outlined within the workforce region’s “single point of contact plan.” This plan includes not only OWD staff but also other business services teams within the MPWS. The plan outlines the Job Center’s strategy to promote the area’s workforce services, including promotion of veterans and eligible persons among employers. This approach assures maximum opportunity to promote the veteran and eligible person as a trained, skilled, and reliable product to market to the employer. All staff conducting employer contacts promote veterans and veteran programs and document their contacts in the state’s electronic data system.

Missouri also fosters local partnerships with meetings to connect core and combined state plan partners, required partners, and additional partners, as well as other stakeholders.

- The MPWS formed Nexus groups comprised of core, required, and other interested partners in sharing local job opportunities and responding with one voice to area employers.

- Where possible, the MPWS co-locates AEL classrooms with one-stop services to ensure effective referrals. Regions develop standardized referral systems where co-location isn't possible. AEL programs also share assessment results and co-enrolled student barriers to provide streamlined service delivery.
- AEL and MVR join forces to address the needs of students with disabilities through co-enrollment and identifying employers eager to hire those individuals.
- The DSS OWCI programs and local WDBs coordinate on systems, processes, and referrals to assist DSS clients with available resources they may not know exist.
- MPWS partners collaborate to represent the employer community with one voice. This collaboration of MVR, RSB, OWCI, LWDBs, OWD, and DED's business outreach teams allows for stronger representation to employers in Missouri.
- DOC has collaborated with the MPWS to establish 19 Reentry Connect Centers across Missouri. These "one-stop centers behind the walls" offer employment preparation activities, training, career exploration, access to supportive services, and direct linkage referrals to MPWS services upon release.

C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The MPWS works collaboratively to develop a process that will facilitate smooth referrals between and among the various one-stop partner agencies and sets an expectation that each partner holds their staff accountable for knowing enough about each available service in order to give an individual the information they need to make an informed choice. If a partner is unsure of an agency to refer customers to, the partner may make a referral to the local job center. Offering integrated services to individuals plays to the overall strength of delivery of services to individuals with barriers and supports the implementation of policies and practices for service design and delivery to maximize efficiency and access to services for our customers.

This process ensures that partners are providing high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services, throughout the workforce system. It brings together workforce development, education, and other human resource services in a seamless customer-focused delivery network that enhances access to services. Long-term employment outcomes are improved for jobseekers as partners administer separately funded programs in compliance with their individual statutory requirements while continuing to provide a set of integrated, streamlined services to customers.

- Veterans and other military-connected individuals who have been screened and determined eligible for and interested in one-on-one services from a DVOP, will be provided itinerate services to afford individualized career services, when travel to a Job Center would create

an undue hardship. JVSG staff collaborate and communicate with partner staff to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to case management. DVOPs and CODLs conduct outreach to local resource providers to build and maintain a network of supportive services to meet the needs of those they serve.

- To ensure cohesion with the MPWS, AEL provides relevant regional labor market information in its IET Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan unites this information with IET basics and identifies potential partners, laying the groundwork for all local AEL programs to enhance their workforce development offerings. The MPWS also assists AEL service providers in partnership development with targeted technical assistance and one-on-one introductions. Collaboration with partners through the MPWS catalyzes statewide partnership development that AEL fosters locally. AEL reports on the progress of its IET Strategic Plan to all MPWS stakeholders annually. DESE AEL staff are members of the Missouri Association of Workforce Development (MAWD), and an experienced local program director represents AEL on the MAWD Advisory Board.
- Missouri strives to provide customer-focused quality services to allow staff time to focus on service delivery rather than bureaucratic processes. Missouri continuously pursues avenues to streamline processes, remove bottlenecks, and break down organizational silos. Missouri is consistent and progressive in taking measures to limit waste by utilizing electronic filing systems when possible and identifying and eliminating unnecessary paperwork and outdated practices.
- OWD places a high emphasis on monitoring quality service delivery and compliance by the local workforce boards and subcontractors. OWD's compliance unit develops statewide policies and issuances designed to ensure quality service delivery, performs desktop and in-person monitoring of all case management activities and practices, and provides technical assistance to support consistency in the delivery of customer service. Local partners continue to streamline their own policies, procedures, and practices and follow required state policies regarding customer eligibility and data system management.
- DES and the OWD are jointly responsible for the operation of Missouri's Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program.
- DES partners with OWD to offer extensive re-employment services for jobseekers. The collaborative efforts maintain an environment within both agencies that allows data sharing which sustains a large number of programs aimed at improving the ability of unemployed workers to find new jobs or seek further education to enhance opportunities for re-employment. An example of this is implementation of the job matching system, where an unemployed worker is provided with available job openings matching their skills and prior work history when filing an unemployment claim.
- All WIOA partners mutually agree to make services available to participants referred by another partner. The partners mutually agree that regardless of which partner initiates services, it is the shared responsibility of all partners to contribute, as appropriate, to the success of a participant's career pathway and mobility in the workforce.

D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Missouri uses an integrated approach to service delivery for business customers. An emphasis is placed on products and services that assess candidate skills and provide for skills enhancement, resulting in better candidates for the business customer. Missouri has multiple initiatives to assess candidates, upgrade workplace skills, and connect businesses with jobseekers.

Each local region has a business services team plan that guides outreach and services to businesses. Business services teams are made up of staff whose mission is to connect employers to a skilled workforce. To ensure an integrated service model, teams include business representatives from MVR, along with other core and combined state plan partners who connect with businesses. At a minimum, the members of the teams include business representatives and other job center staff assigned to business services, LVERs, and MVR Business Outreach Specialists. The design and makeup of each team varies slightly from region to region and may include a variety of other partners who work with businesses, such as local economic developers, educational agencies, RSB Job Development Specialists, and DSS, Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives Employer and Community Engagement Specialists.

Business services teams meet on a regular basis to discuss, coordinate, and develop strategies to meet the specific needs of businesses in their local workforce region. These include the use of labor market information, involvement and coordination with local chambers of commerce, local educational agencies, local and state economic developers, regional planning commissions, human resource groups, and other business organizations. Each workforce region engages in sector planning to better address skills gaps and create career pathways.

Business services teams strive to accommodate employer requests or provide referrals to resources that can meet their needs. This message is conveyed to all staff through the local WDB directors, business services team leaders, job center leadership, and WIOA partner staff. Business services drive the products and services offered in the workforce system. Teams are aware of the business climate and current workforce needs of businesses in their regions. This allows the system to offer the appropriate products and services that will prepare jobseekers to meet current demands.

Each region's employer outreach goals and procedures, as well as each partner's specific procedures, are outlined in their respective business services plans. These plans are shared and coordinated with business services team staff and partner agencies. Missouri encourages a single point of contact system. Each regional team has developed protocols and procedures necessary to avoid duplication of efforts, which are outlined in their regional business outreach plans. OWD's case management system, MoJobs, is available to workforce system staff to document employer contacts and services provided.

Through cross training and collaborative Nexus meetings with outreach staff from all partners, the business services teams understand each agency's business-focused programs and services. This allows staff to provide information on all relevant programs to business customers and to integrate and coordinate services among agencies. In addition, teams have identified common programs and services, such as on-the-job training, which can be marketed to employers.

OWD surveys employer customers, assesses the effectiveness of services provided to businesses, and provides feedback to workforce directors, business services teams, job center staff, and partner agencies. This information can be utilized by all workforce system partners to identify issues and to better coordinate meeting businesses' needs.

The Missouri Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning formed the Missouri Apprenticeship Team (MAT). MAT team members are committed apprenticeship partners from across the state who dedicate their time to expanding the Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program in Missouri.

Team members consist of the following agencies and/or representatives:

- Missouri Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning
- U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship
- Apprenticeship Missouri Staff
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) - Registered Youth Apprenticeship (RYA) Consultants
- Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation
- Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)
- Comprehensive High Schools and Career and Technical Education Centers, RYA Apprenticeship Coordinators
- Missouri Universities and Community Colleges, Apprenticeship Specialists and Apprenticeship Outreach Directors
- Local WDB RA Sponsors
- Local Veterans' Employment Representatives
- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- DSS, Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives
- Department of Economic Development
- Department of Transportation
- Participating Program Sponsors and/or Employers

Members of MAT are committed to tracking leads together, converting unregistered apprenticeships to registered, and identifying new RA opportunities and occupations. The team meets six times a year virtually. This ensures efforts to develop talent pipelines through RA are not carried out in isolation, thereby increasing efficiency, eliminating duplication, and reducing employer fatigue.

The Office of Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning has formed an interagency council consisting of partners from DHEWD, DED, DOC, MVR, DSS, DESE, and the Missouri Department of

Mental Health. The purpose of the council is to collaborate as stakeholders in the talent development of Missourians. The council collaborates to coordinate apprenticeship expansion strategy and streamline services and policy in order to ensure optimal stewardship of resources. The council has developed the Apprenticeship Missouri five-year plan, which focuses on dedicated outreach staff for registered apprenticeships with employers, creation and improvement or updating of outreach materials, and pursuit of funding opportunities to promote registered apprenticeships and work-based learning. This five-year plan was shared with other stakeholders to ensure strategic alignment across the public workforce system.

AEL initiates MPWS partnership projects through targeted goal alignment meetings connecting local AEL service providers with important workforce development stakeholders. To promote referrals between AEL local service providers and job center services, AEL facilitated one-on-one sessions between local WDBs, contracted providers, OWD, and local AEL staff. These meetings successfully ensured proper communication and procedures for referrals within the MPWS. AEL will continue these efforts to support service braiding for Missouri's adult students. The MPWS initiated relationships between AEL local service providers and employers, building workplace AEL and English acquisition classrooms as a foundation for IET programs. AEL programs developed services with La-Z-Boy, Ajinomoto, Mercy Hospitals, Amazon, Hitachi, The Sewing Labs, and WEG Transformers.

To promote employment retention, the MPWS positions local AEL services to reach employed students and incumbent workers through their employers. Local AEL program staff help employers meet current employees' education and training needs to benefit the student and the employer. Workplace literacy education encourages employment retention and mobility, and incumbent worker classrooms create promotional opportunities.

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program helps meet the needs of employers through Community Action Agencies (CAA). CAAs are local private and public nonprofit organizations that carry out the Community Action Program (CAP), which was founded by the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act to fight poverty by empowering the poor as part of the War on Poverty. CAAs regularly host job fairs and resource events to connect employers with a potential workforce. In addition, CAAs meet employers' needs by skilling up participants through job readiness activities, supportive services, life skills training, and leadership classes. All activities of the CAAs are based on a community needs assessment, which is conducted every three years. Employers and community-based organizations are engaged in this process through surveys and focus groups.

The MWA partners with employers by providing subsidized employment opportunities in which the MWA contractor pays the participant's wages for OJT, which may lead to employment of a Temporary Assistance (TA) participant. These programs allow the MWA contractor to act as the liaison between the participant and the employer and keep the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP) at the forefront. Subsidized employment allows the employer to train and determine if the participant meets their needs for the actual job. Feedback from the employer to the MWA contractors allows areas of needed improvement for the participant to be identified and conquered. OJT allows the employer to provide the hands-on-training needed for their business, making the program a win-win for all involved.

In addition, as MWA moves forward in aligning TANF with WIOA, MWA contractors are required to use labor analysis reports to analyze workforce, labor supply and demand, and the regional occupational outlook of their assigned region(s) to ensure they are meeting the economic and employer demands of their region. MWA contractors are encouraged to use career pathways and to create and maintain partnerships with local employers to learn the in-demand jobs and skills needed for the current market. The TANF program encourages MWA contractors in these avenues by emphasizing a contractor's achievements based on quality of service and performance measures similar to WIOA. Examples of such measures include participants becoming employed with a defined career pathway and participants in OJT training or an apprenticeship.

SkillUP partners with the Missouri Community Action Network, Missouri Community College Association, and OWD to provide industry aligned training that will lead to family supported employment and sustainability by offering short-term skills training or education. SkillUP serves the needs of employers with a skilled workforce for a multitude of industries through its partnerships.

The Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program is an alternative to layoffs for employers faced with a reduction in available work. It allows an employer to divide the available work among a specified group of affected employees instead of a layoff. These employees receive a portion of their unemployment benefits while working reduced hours. The Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program can be particularly beneficial in returning employees to work during an uncertain time as it allows employers the flexibility to scale up or scale down the workforce based on changing business needs.

E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions and other Education and Training Providers.

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State's eligible training provider list, and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.

Education in conjunction with the MPWS participants and employers is a key element in the three-legged stool of participants necessary to develop quality sector strategies in Missouri. The MPWS has strong partnerships with its educational institutions and other education and training providers. Educational institutions have long had a practice of involving employers in providing input to the development of needed training programs. Therefore, it is key to have the perspective and expertise of education as part of MPWS strategy and implementation.

The Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) plays a key role in bringing MPWS and education together. ETPS can not only help partners engage with quality training programs but can provide technical assistance for improvement. An example is training to ensure educational institutions are implementing practices and providing accurate tracking for participants.

Community colleges are often identified as pass-through entities for state workforce discretionary funds, intermediaries, or related-training instruction providers for apprenticeships and pre-

apprenticeships as well as training providers for many of the core partner program participants. These institutions play a key role in assuring positive outcomes for individuals.

Educational institutions work alongside the MPWS to carry out the governor's workforce initiatives and to address workforce crises which developed during and after COVID. Governor Kehoe's 2025 Workforce of the Future Challenge presented an unprecedented opportunity to convene leaders from the MPWS, including educators, business and industry partners, career counseling experts, and agency representatives. This work group determined new areas of alignment that will build reliable talent pipelines, remove duplicity, and bring more Missourians into the workforce with in-demand skills. For example, one recommendation of the work group unites CTE and WIOA resources to expand the Integrated Education and Training (IET) model, which upskills adults. Another recommendation is to build a central work-based learning toolkit with templates customized regionally by education and business partners. In meeting the Governor's Challenge, the MPWS will create new models of workforce innovation that directly improve local service delivery.

Through sector strategy initiatives and further asset mapping, Missouri has created educational pathways that can be seamlessly promoted through the one-stop delivery system. Using strategies which focus on customer service, sector strategies, and career pathways, business leaders, career and technical education (CTE) programs, and community colleges assist in creating accessible training programs that meet the needs of businesses and provide customers with work-based learning.

Through CSBG, Community Action Agencies (CAAs) have partnerships with community colleges and technical schools throughout the state. Partnerships provide educational opportunities, either through direct access to classroom instruction or collaborations with life skills classes that increase participants' capacities to attain educational goals. Many partnerships have formal Memorandums of Understanding delineating responsibilities of each party.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) OWCI has educational partnerships with community colleges through the Missouri Community College Association. The community colleges offer services to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients enrolled in the SkillUP program as well as participants enrolled in the MWA program. Each MWA region works locally with their educational institutions to develop programs that respond to the needs in their area. This includes the colleges providing additional class times or creating classes to meet the needs. The OWCI also has partnerships with 74 Missouri school districts that provide 116 different programs associated with the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG). In addition, the OWCI has a close working relationship with the six Excel Centers (adult high schools), located in St. Louis, Cape Girardeau, Florissant, Springfield, Columbia, and Poplar Bluff, where any Missourian over the age of 21 may enroll to receive their high school diploma while receiving career, life, and college counseling. The Missouri Legislature appropriated additional funding to create a new location in the Kansas City area, which is set to open in October 2025.

OWD collaborates with CTEs to identify in-demand occupations which are then shared with the area career and technical schools to ensure that training needs match employer expectations.

OWD has engaged career and technical schools, community colleges, United Auto Workers, AFL-CIO, and employers to partner and develop pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeship programs. Examples are in advanced manufacturing and diesel mechanics. This partnership with education, labor, and employers ensures job-driven education and training systems.

As part of the MPWS, the Department of Corrections (DOC) plays an integral role in reaching justice-involved individuals prior to release. In FY 2024, approximately 3,000 incarcerated individuals were enrolled in basic education programs, 1,003 were enrolled in postsecondary education opportunities through partnership with area Career and Technical Education Centers and community colleges, and 967 individuals completed a DOC vocational training education program. In addition, 665 individuals obtained their high school equivalency at 100 percent success rate. Access to higher education continues to be a priority as well. DOC has partnerships with eight Missouri colleges and universities. The existing collaboration with educational institutions, AEL, MVR, OWCI, and OWD is essential to ensure that incarcerated individuals who also experience additional barriers to employment have access to services which contribute to successful community integration upon release.

DOC is also looking for opportunities to expand services, such as utilizing DED industry cluster data sets to assist in determining needed trainings for Missourians for in demand industry opportunities. DOC is also contracting out services in the IT field of coding. These skills will aid clients in securing quality jobs in the IT field.

In addition to credentials already offered by AEL (manufacturing, IT, construction, healthcare, customer service, logistics, and more), the MPWS relies on educational institutions to provide AEL services around the state. Ten out of Missouri's 28 AEL providers are community colleges or universities. This gives direct access for AEL students to experience postsecondary options and, in many cases, enables students through remediation of skills in preparation for credit-earning courses. K-12 institutions providing AEL services rely on CTEs to enhance occupational and workplace readiness for adult students. These partnerships that currently provide adult basic/secondary education are the primary foundation for the MPWS to expand IET programming for adult students.

In 2019, the Division of Workforce Development merged with the Department of Higher Education creating the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, Office of Workforce Development. The newly created department continues to closely align training and education and ensure cohesive customer support for the jobseeker and the business.

Offered through DHEWD, the Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant is a program that supports working adults with an income of \$40,000 or less, or \$80,000 or less when filing jointly, in completing an associate or bachelor's degree for in-demand occupations. Individuals have to meet other eligibility requirements and must be at least 25 years old or have not been enrolled in an educational program the two previous years, have not already earned a bachelor's degree, must reside in Missouri and be a U.S. citizen, and cannot have a defaulted student loan. In 2022, the Missouri legislature added Registered Apprenticeship as an acceptable training program to receive FastTrack funding. This investment in the adult population will increase Missouri's workforce availability and productivity.

Building Missouri's Future is Missouri's strategic plan for higher education and workforce development. Adopted in December 2021 and updated in March 2025, the plan guides initiatives and priorities in Missouri for the next three to five years. The original plan was created using data to determine statewide needs and compare Missouri to other Midwestern states. It outlines a comprehensive plan for education, training, and the public workforce system in order to encourage economic growth and personal success among Missourians.

It also established milestones in order to meet workforce demands and continue to help citizens compete in a global economy. Missouri will strive to be the best among other Midwestern states by reaching 60 percent educational attainment and 70 percent labor force participation by 2030 with equity goals aligned for both.

The MPWS provides adult education services to justice-involved individuals through DOC programming and AEL partnerships. Challenges for correctional adult education programs include staffing and access to technology. Instructors and proctors create new procedures to ensure the continuity of services for justice-involved individuals and often rely on paper testing and assessment. Post-pandemic, some facilities now allow certain mobile devices off the network. Teachers can use those devices to continue learning with adult correctional students outside minimal class times. The MPWS continues to support innovation in serving Missouri's adult students in congregate care facilities.

To determine the recidivism rate for criminal offenders served, Missouri uses a data match to determine all individuals enrolled in Adult Education and incarcerated in the Department of Corrections with a release date of July 2019 through June 2022. The table below shows the de-duplicated recidivism rate through 2022 for those individuals. In all date ranges measured, the AEL student recidivism rate is lower than that of the entire corrections population. The data demonstrate the capacity of Department of Corrections AEL programs to affect their students' lives in a meaningful way.

Recidivism of Justice-Involved Individuals Exiting the Adult Education and Literacy Program 2019-2022					
Year of Release	Number of Releases	Return to Incarceration Within:			
		6 months	12 months	2 years	3 years
2019	472	7.8%	15.3%	27.6%	35.1%
2020	595	6.1%	15.6%	30.6%	36.0%
2021	431	5.8%	12.8%	23.8%	29.6%
2022	463	4.8%	14.3%	30.4%	34.6%

A skilled, prepared, and motivated workforce is necessary to attract and retain businesses in Missouri. The MPWS recognizes all training opportunities beyond high school as highly valuable.

Apprenticeships and on-the-job training, short-term certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and beyond all contribute to the economic health of the state.

F. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

Demand for workers with some form of postsecondary credential remains higher than the number of Missourians with those credentials. About 35 percent of jobs require some education and training beyond high school, but less than a bachelor's degree. Another 30 percent of jobs require a bachelor's degree or higher.

The benefits of increased education go beyond a paycheck. Postsecondary credentials continue to be good for communities as a whole. These credentials contribute to better health, create engaged citizens, and lower incarceration rates. Creating opportunities and removing barriers to education and training will help the state fill skills gaps and support the economy.

Key to improving access to postsecondary credentials is ensuring that training providers are properly vetted and can engage and foster student completion of their programs. In 2023, Missouri's ETPS completed an alignment process with the DHEWD to remove any questionable or ineligible training entities and align the approval with DHEWD's existing processes. This will assist in making sure that jobseekers are accessing the best training to meet their needs.

The MPWS is collaborating with DHEWD to bridge the gap between educational attainment and workforce participation. DHEWD's strategic plan set goals of 60 percent of Missourians achieving educational attainment and 70 percent labor force participation by 2030. The MPWS focus is not only to help individuals attain the credentials, but that these credentials lead to quality, in-demand and self-sustaining jobs. Therefore, these credentials must be portable and stackable.

To improve access to activities leading to postsecondary credentials, the MPWS partners with DHEWD to hold "FASFA Frenzy" events in job centers. Staff provide education and information on various financial aid programs, such as Pell, Access Missouri, Fast Track, Bright Flight, and A+. They also blend this information in with access to program funding, including WIOA, SkillUP, and funding provided through MVR and RSB. This partnering helps improve access to various avenues of aid and assists in removing cost as a barrier to obtaining credentials.

Missouri ranks in the top tier for the development of Registered Apprenticeships (RA). RAs are a valuable "earn as you learn" opportunity for jobseekers and epitomize an example of a good job with portable credentialing and career advancement. MPWS partners ensure improved access to apprenticeship credentials through the Missouri Apprenticeship Team, the annual Statewide Apprenticeship Summit, the Office of Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning Council, participation in state and national speaking engagements, podcasts, and social media campaigns.

G. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

The mission of the Department of Economic Development (DED) is to help create greater opportunities for Missourians to prosper. DED works to create an environment that encourages economic growth by supporting Missouri's businesses and diverse industries, strengthening communities, developing a talented and skilled workforce, and maintaining a high quality of life. Some of those programs include:

Missouri One Start

Missouri One Start provides a tailored workforce strategy to address the unique needs of a business. Missouri One Start helps businesses of all sizes stay competitive by providing personalized recruitment assistance and resources to train and upskill their new and existing employees. This comprehensive workforce program ensures Missouri businesses have the right workforce, with the right skill set, at the right time.

Missouri One Start partners with community colleges and other local education agencies to customize services ranging from pre-employment screening and recruitment to designing job-specific training both during and after the onboarding process. Training programs are tailored to the unique workforce needs of a business, with flexibility in how services are delivered. Training funds can be used to offset in-house training costs, utilized for preferred training vendors, or applied to one of the training experts located within a community college, state technical college, or career technical center. As employers are ready to hire, the DED team works with the other MPWS partners to coordinate services to feed their talent pipelines and ensure that they have any additional support services which are needed to support this effort.

Since 2019, Missouri One Start has provided training assistance to nearly 2,000 company projects and invested over \$140 million to train new and existing employees. As a result, over 257,000 Missourians were able to enhance their skill set with these resources and companies invested over \$13 billion in capital expenditures at their facilities in Missouri.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) - Workforce Training Grant Program

The ARPA Workforce Training Grant Program, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), was launched in August 2022. The program awarded competitive grants to a wide range of applicants to train workers for a variety of industries including childcare, health care, broadband deployment, manufacturing, and more. The grant is also aimed at helping those who need it most, encouraging recipients to train at-risk and low-income populations. MPWS partners support the grantees by providing various workforce-related services as needed.

With this grant, companies are able to address the broad workforce disruption stemming from the pandemic through grants funding projects to recruit and train individuals who are seeking to move to a job that provides better opportunity for economic advancement. As of January 2023, \$30 million in grant funds were awarded.

The MWPS also collaborates with DED on specific programs for targeted populations by ensuring that their respective and combined customers are provided information and resource links to them:

Family Development Account (FDA) is a tax credit for contribution program to help low-income Missourians participate in matched savings programs. These savings programs will help families pay for school or job training, purchase a primary residence, make home improvements, or start up a small business. Under FDA, a tax credit is equal to 50 percent of eligible contributions, not to exceed \$25,000 per contributor.

Missouri Community Service Commission: AmeriCorps provides support to organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities through funding and people power. AmeriCorps grants are provided to nonprofit organizations to help develop a project that meets critical community needs in the areas of education, disaster services, health, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity, and veterans and military families. Planning Grants enable organizations to plan a proposed AmeriCorps program and develop (or replicate) systems for the successful implementation of an AmeriCorps operational grant application. From January-December 2024, selected organizations will use planning grants to become better prepared to compete for an AmeriCorps program grant in the subsequent grant cycle (2025-2026).

Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) is a tax credit for contribution program to fund projects such as job training initiatives, crime prevention, education, community service projects, and physical revitalization of community-based buildings and areas. To administer a project, approved eligible nonprofit or business organizations are granted assistance in the form of state tax credits to help attract business donors who would be able to redirect their Missouri tax dollars to an approved community development project. Under NAP, a tax credit is equal to 50 percent or 70 percent of eligible contributions. NAP helps encourage donations/contributions to qualifying organizations to fund a variety of activities and projects such as counseling, childcare services, literacy programs, job training, services to ex-offenders, construction of community centers, free business consultation program for entrepreneurs and small business owners, renovation of a distressed building in a downtown or major corridor, and more.

The Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) helps encourage donations/contributions to qualifying nonprofit organizations, local government agencies, businesses, and schools to fund a variety of activities and projects for at-risk youth (21 years and under). Qualifying projects include programs such as internship/apprenticeship programs, violence prevention programs, job training programs, youth activity centers, substance abuse prevention, education programs, mentor and role model programs, and more. YOP tax credits are allocated to approve organizations that secure contributions from individuals and businesses with MO state tax liability. The contributor receives tax credits for those contributions. There are 50 percent tax credits for monetary contributions and 30 percent tax credits for property or equipment contributions used specifically for the project.

In 2023, the Missouri legislature passed HB 417, which created incentives for the purpose of encouraging individuals to obtain employment-related skills. Both of these DED funded programs will increase opportunities for career pathways and allow for significant collaboration among MPWS partners:

Intern and Apprentice Recruitment Act

The Intern and Apprentice Tax Credit (IATC) encourages businesses to grow the number of interns or apprentices they employ and thus secure and retain workforce talent within the state. This program authorizes an income tax credit for eligible taxpayers who hire an intern or apprentice. The tax credit shall equal \$1,500 for each intern or apprentice hired at a pay rate equal to or greater than the minimum wage, provided that the number of interns and apprentices employed during the tax year exceeds the average number of interns and apprentices employed by the taxpayer for the previous three years, and further provided that the interns and apprentices work a certain number of hours, as described in the act.

Credential Training Fund

The Credential Training Program is a competitive grant to help employers offset the cost of their employee or perspective employee obtain an industry-related credential. Qualifying employers may receive a reimbursement up to \$2,000 per individual, \$30,000 max per company within the state fiscal year for individuals to receive a short-term industry credential.

The Department of Economic Development will evaluate all applications by qualifying employers on a competitive basis using the following criteria: (a) The pledged average wage increase that employees or prospective employees will realize after obtaining the upskill credential in relation to the cost of obtaining the upskill credential; (b) The level of economic distress in the qualifying employer's region and the balance of awards made to the various regions of the state; and (c) The contribution made by the qualifying employer toward the cost of obtaining the upskill credential.

b. State Operating Systems and Policies

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section II Strategic Elements. This includes—

1. The State operating systems that will support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case management systems, job banks, etc.).

The MPWS operates with the following systems:

- Literacy Adult and Community Education System (LACES) from LiteracyPro is the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education AEL statewide data information system from which federal National Reporting System data is obtained.
- MVR and RSB utilize the AWARE system. The Alliance Enterprise AWARE system was deployed in 2009 for MVR. RSB made the transition from System 7 to AWARE in 2019. In the summer of 2023, RSB established a connection to the AWARE database tables in Tableau. RSB expects this tool to be an asset to the agency in making data informed decisions. RSB has implemented DocuSign in 2021 which has enabled quicker processing of application packets and allowed a more rapid engagement of client services. RSB's Ticket

Tracker project replaces the manual tracking and claim submission process to request cost reimbursements from the Social Security Administration. Ticket tracker will increase RSB's claim capture rate which will result in increased revenue for agency programs such as our Older Blind Services and Independent Living Programs.

- MyDSS.mo.gov is an online portal that directs customers to the correct online application to apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance (TA) cash benefits, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and Mo HealthNet (Medicaid) programs. Additionally, paper applications are available online for download to complete and submit through the mail.
- Family Assistance Management Information System (FAMIS) is an integrated system deployed in 2000 and used by the FSD to complete eligibility determinations and case processing for SNAP; MO HealthNet; and TA (cash benefits). Staff enter information from applications and verification into the eligibility system to determine benefit eligibility.
- Missouri's Eligibility and Enrollment System (MEDES) is the upgraded eligibility system used to determine eligibility for Family Mo HealthNet programs for Missouri families.
- SNAP Module - All SkillUP providers utilize OWD's MoJobs system for case management participants. Referrals are made from FAMIS to this system of SNAP clients eligible for services. Providers document participant assessments, employability plans, supportive services (components), employment obtained, educational status, and enter case notes. The Able Bodied Adults without Dependents self-directed job search hours are automatically sent to FAMIS from MoJobs. This system allows SkillUP providers to generate reports to facilitate case management. These reports include caseload by case manager, active cases, services provided individual, employment obtained, credentials obtained, and cases that have exited the program.
- Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) Case Management System - All MWA providers utilize the robust MWA System for the case management of participants. Referrals and updates are received from the FAMIS eligibility system. Providers document participant assessments, employability plans, employment and training activities, employment obtained and enter case notes. Alerts are sent to FAMIS when changes occur that impact eligibility. Participation hours in work activities are recorded in the system as well as supportive service payments to participants. The system allows providers to transfer cases from one provider to another. Templates for letters and forms are available in the system. This system also supplies MWA providers with reports to facilitate case management.
- Missouri's Automated Child Support System (MACCS) is used by the Child Support Division to case manage child support cases by tracking child support orders and payments, documentation of locating parents, recording establishment of paternity, monitoring and enforcing compliance orders, recording modifications of support orders, and distribution of child support collections.
- The Missouri Information System (MIS) is a system developed and maintained by Adsystech for use by the Community Action Agency Network. MIS is utilized for customer intake, assessments, and referrals. The system allows for the data tracking and reporting of federally required outcomes.

- Department of Social Services, Office of Community and Workforce Initiatives has compiled a LISTSERV of almost 170,000 Missourians who have opted in to receive email communications highlighting hiring fairs, job opportunities, and community resources. Employers can reach potential employees through specific advertisements highlighting their hourly pay, benefits, and other perks such as hiring bonuses.
- MoJobs, developed by Geographic Solutions, Inc., has been in place with OWD since 2017. This software platform has been implemented in multiple states. The online accessible system performs functions including client registration, case management, database, and reporting and is accessible from a portal called jobs.mo.gov. The system is customer friendly and transitions smoothly to staff assisted program enrollment. From the jobs.mo.gov portal, the system also has a public-facing side that communicates information, including job opening information, features about programs, and labor market information.
- UInteract is a comprehensive solution that supports the administration of the state's Unemployment Insurance program. The solution interfaces with OWD's jobs.mo.gov, creating a preliminary registration and providing unemployed workers real-time relevant information regarding potential job opportunities that fit their defined skillset, prior work history, and geographic preference. Additionally, UInteract identifies, selects, and refers eligible claimants for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment programs that provide enhanced reemployment services through Missouri's job centers.

2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (for example. co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, provide the State's guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system and any additional guidance for one-stop partner contributions.

The core and combined state plan partners are committed to working together to provide high-quality workforce services. Partners continue to develop policies and service agreements to support collaboration in improving services. Partners cross train job center and other partner staff on programmatic requirements and processes.

The partners require local providers, through policy and guidance, to utilize Missouri Economic Research and Information Center data or engage employers when placing clients in high-demand industry positions. The combination of data and employer engagement also lead to identifying in-demand credentials.

When partners provide job placement services, they have policies in place that require providers to create career pathways with clients. A more robust service structure allows the creation of better career pathways and mobility for customers; therefore, Missouri continues to explore a combined referral process leading to a unified intake system.

Partners continue to learn about each service offered and use this information to align policy with Missouri's vision and goals. Creating policies that support consistent messaging is vital to improving services to customers. Co-enrollment continues to be a focus for partners and will be an ongoing effort regarding referrals and tracking services.

Each partner will continue to develop the ability to track referrals and complete follow up to create a uniform and consistent process. Office of Workforce Development (OWD) requires job center staff to document every referral including the method of referral and subsequent follow-up.

Partners continue to develop policies to share and reallocate resources that lead to non-duplication of efforts and additional capacity. Partners continue to follow MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement guidelines, which encourage utilizing all resources including cash and in-kind contributions. This leads to the opportunity for increased and new partner collaboration.

To support the implementation of the state's strategies the OWD has created a mandatory Co-Enrollment Requirement. Staff must present all customers of WIOA partners with the availability of services for which they are eligible or potentially eligible. Staff must actively engage and assist customers in co-enrolling in services they choose and that maximize informed consumer choice. When WIOA partners co-enroll customers, we are better able to:

- Achieve the vision and goals laid out in WIOA;
- Improve participant outcomes by meeting the needs of employers and jobseekers;
- Improve WIOA partner outcomes by collaborating to achieve our performance goals; and
- Eliminate barriers to services and reduce the burden on customers to identify and access our services.

The mandatory Co-Enrollment Requirement states:

- All jobseekers receiving staff-assisted services in a job center (including Youth) must be enrolled in the Wagner-Peyser program.
- All Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) participants must be co-enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program, unless the enrollment is waived by the participant.
- All National Dislocated Worker Grant participants must be co-enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program if they meet the eligibility requirements.

In addition, OWD in conjunction with the partners, has developed a One-Stop Certification policy and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) policy. These policies address the guidelines for one-stop partner programs' contributions and delivery of services.

The One-Stop Certification policy includes an evaluation that examines effectiveness (including customer satisfaction), physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement.

The On-Site Evaluation includes staff interviews to ensure they have knowledge of all programs and services, including WIOA required partner programs/services.

The MOU sets the guidance for one-stop partner contributions and delivery of services. The MOU is developed between the local board and each required one-stop partner and must include:

- A description of the services to be provided, the method of service delivery, the location(s) at which the services will be provided, and the cost sharing of infrastructure and local workforce delivery system costs. The MOU must accurately reflect the way in which required partners will integrate services; and

- Be consistent with MOWDB's current policy on MOUs and funding of local workforce delivery system operations in relation to negotiating costs and services.

All unemployment insurance (UI) claimants are required to report to a Job Center and data from the UI system is automatically transmitted to the OWD job centers to aid claimant registration in jobs.mo.gov. Additionally, UI claimants that use the DES UInteract online application receive information regarding potential job opportunities when the claimant files the initial claim and each certified week. In 2019, DES updated its Work Search policy for UI claimants to further define work search activities that fulfill the requirements for continued UI program eligibility. The policy encourages claimants to leverage local job center services to assist in their return to work. Participation in such services during the week can be credited toward meeting the work search requirement for the week.

MVR's policy manual requires that any individual not eligible for the program must be referred to other workforce partners or programs for possible employment services. Individuals who meet eligibility requirements but are on a waiting list for services, are referred to designated job center staff for assistance with resources.

The MVR policy manual guides staff in vocational planning. Staff are to explore current labor market information when goal planning with individuals to ensure employment availability in desired areas. Staff are directed to enlist the aid of MVR business services specialists to assist with identifying industry sector positions within their local regions.

MVR has representation on nine workforce development boards. The collaboration between OWD and MVR staff members during local workforce board meetings promotes progress on the state's workforce system goals. MVR staff also participates in board subcommittees such as disability committees. The value MVR leadership places on partnering is evident in its policy requiring local staff to work directly with local workforce boards and job centers. MVR has representation on the WIOA Steering committee and ad hoc subcommittees.

The MVR policy manual requires staff to consider the availability of comparable services through other partners to maximize resources. MVR has an online self-referral system as an additional option for program access. MVR is adding links to workforce partners' websites including access to their self-referral systems and program information.

RSB's Job Development unit provides services, information, and resources to local job centers and local businesses including education about employer benefits for hiring individuals with disabilities.

RSB works with the State Workforce Development Board, local WDBs, and the Missouri Economic Research Information Center (MERIC) to determine key economic and industry indicators to help increase career opportunities for RSB clients.

RSB develops partnerships with the job centers' business services teams. This has allowed RSB to expand employer outreach and to attain local job market trends. RSB has partnered with MVR to have informational meetings with all job centers across the state on services offered and how to partner for common clients.

RSB staff participates in the local WDB meetings. RSB executive staff is involved with multiple WIOA committees and has a representative on the Missouri Association for Workforce Development Board.

RSB's policy manual provides guidance to staff to ensure collaboration with workforce partners for various situations such as RSB Chapter 9 for Information and Referral Services, RSB Chapter 16 for Pre-Employment Transition Coordination with workforce partners, and also RSB Chapter 22, which details guidance should an order of selection occur. This includes referral to federal and state programs (other than the vocational rehabilitation program), including other components of the statewide workforce development system and the Client Assistance Program.

DSS implemented the DSS Learning Labs to share DSS program and partner program information to anyone through live and recorded trainings. These trainings have allowed consistent messages to be delivered to any partner and provide staff development training that is required under the State of Missouri Leadership Development Rule for managers to receive 40 hours per year. Recordings are available for review.

CSBG offers individuals in the community an opportunity for resources not covered by other funding sources. This supports the combination of braiding of resources from different agencies, partners, and funding sources.

Adult Education and Literacy service providers must provide information on WIOA partner services to all students during intake. Further, programs must collect demographics and evaluate barriers to employment to determine appropriate partner referrals. The AEL Information for Bidders states this requirement. Potential providers must address their intake process, partner referrals, and coordination with local workforce development boards (WDB) in the grant application.

Specifically, applicants are evaluated on the degree to which they would be responsive to

1. Regional needs as identified in the local workforce development plan; and
2. Serving individuals in the community who were identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who
 - have low levels of literacy skills, or
 - are English language learners.
3. The ability of the applicant to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities;
4. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners.

In the grant application, potential service providers must also describe

1. Whether the applicant coordinates with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, Local WDBs, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service

- agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, in the development of career pathways;
2. Whether the applicant's activities offer the flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as childcare, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs; and
 3. Whether the local area in which the eligible provider is located has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

To support co-location and the One-Stop system, the MPWS allows its local programs to spend AEFLA funds on One-Stop infrastructure costs. Unless through a WIOA-required Infrastructure Funding Agreement, DESE expects host agencies to provide infrastructure for local service providers.

In addition to tracking referrals in the statewide student data management system, AEL monitors the following policies published in the statewide Policy and Procedure Guide. These policies are also stated in the Information for Bidders before the grant competition.

AEL Outreach and Community Partnerships Guidelines for Local Service Providers

AEL local programs must coordinate activities with other available resources in the community and establish strong links with elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, job centers, job training programs, nonprofit organizations, and social service agencies. Coordination with other available resources in the community must, at a minimum, meet the description of such activities in the local program's grant/contract with the MPWS.

- Local programs should maintain updated contact and program details with other agencies, programs, and organizations for referral purposes.
- The host agency should support the local program beyond state funding including in-kind, infrastructure, and/or monetary funding.
- Local programs should inform students about the availability of additional academic or occupational training.
- Local programs should develop the collaborations and partnerships identified in their most recent grant application.
- Local programs should have a plan for informing adults of services provided and the times and locations of classes.

AEL Guidelines to Connect Students with Title I Services

- Local programs must provide information regarding Missouri Job Center services to all students during orientation.
- Local programs must refer students to Missouri Job Centers when appropriate.
- Refer students needing supportive services to overcome barriers to attendance to Missouri Job Centers. The Job Center will determine eligibility and assist in finding available supportive services.

- Refer students who are unemployed/underemployed to a local Job Center. Employment concerns may impact student attendance.
- Refer students approaching completion of AEL services to Missouri Job Centers for career services including postsecondary training or employment.
- The local program must enter all referrals to a Job Center into LACES and give a referral form to the student (example form provided to local programs).
- An AEL (Title II) participant (pre-tested with 12+ hours) who also enrolls in Title I at a Missouri Job Center during the reporting period is considered co-enrolled (a MoJobs account is not Title I enrollment).

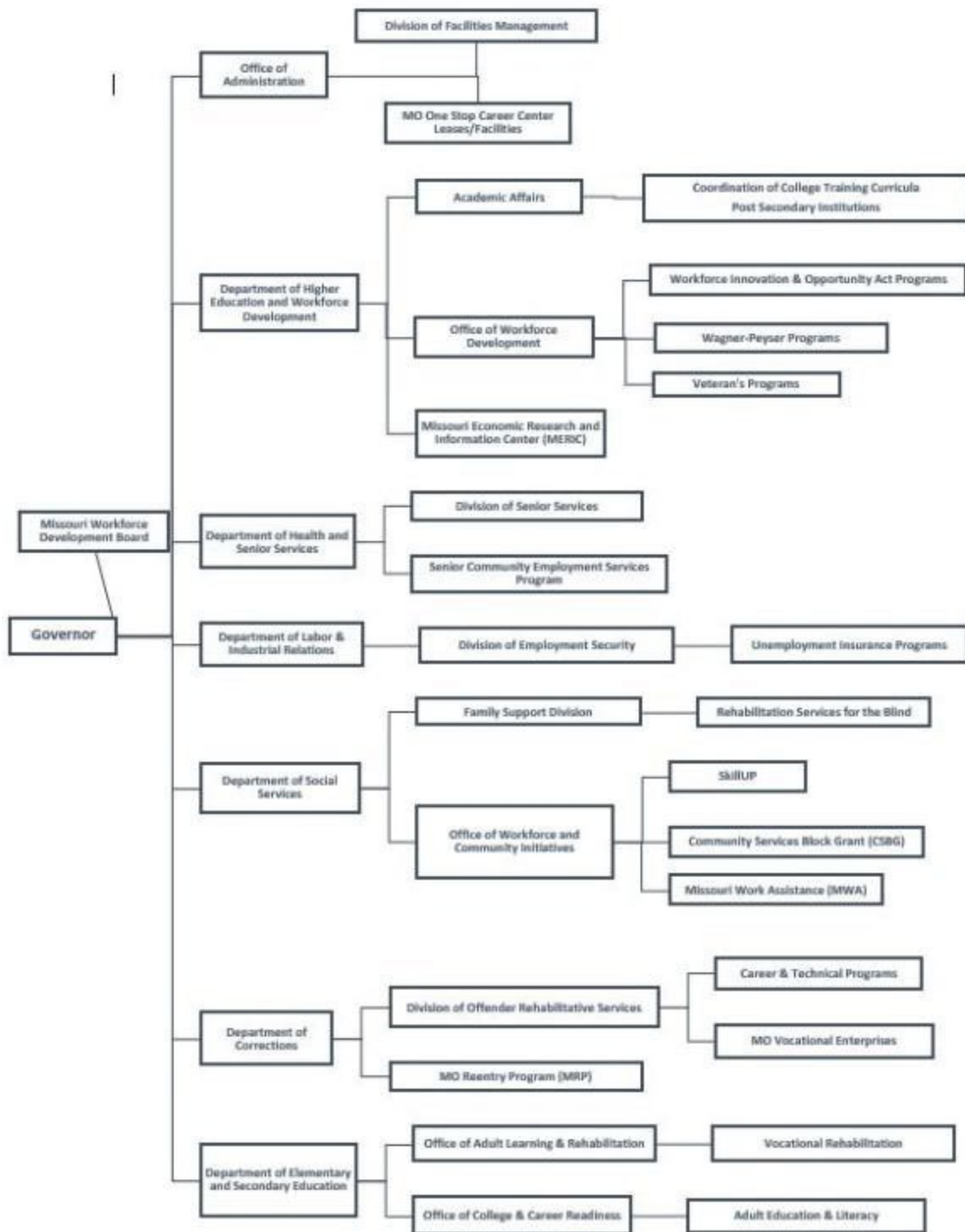
Local programs must refer all AEL students to a Missouri Job Center when appropriate for co-enrollment in Title I. AEL staff monitor this requirement with data matching.

3. State Program and State Board Overview

A. State Agency Organization

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

The governor serves as the grant recipient for the State of Missouri. The governor appoints the members of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), who, in alignment with the governor's priorities, provide leadership across the workforce system. The Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development's Office of Workforce Development, on behalf of the governor, oversees and administers the WIOA programs and holds primary responsibility and accountability for the oversight of Missouri's workforce development system. The governor has designated thirteen (13) Workforce Development Areas and the Chief Elected Officials within those areas to act as grant recipients. The Office of Workforce Development is responsible for coordinating the collaboration among the WIOA core, combined plan and other state agency partners. Below is the organizational chart for the MPWS:



The SWDB represents a wide variety of individuals, businesses, and organizations throughout the state. The Board serves as a convener of state, regional, and local workforce system partners to enhance the capacity and performance of the workforce development system; align and improve employment, training, and education programs; and through these efforts, promote economic

growth. The Board actively participates and collaborates closely with the required partners of the workforce development system, including public and private organizations. In addition, board meetings always allow for conversations with employers, education officials, economic development representatives, and others to further efforts towards achieving the purpose of WIOA, the state's workforce vision and goals. This approach has proven crucial in the Board's role to help integrate and align a more effective job-driven workforce system that invests in the connection between education and career preparation. State Board members value the opportunity to engage and advise Missouri's workforce partners in the setting and implementation of workforce policy for the state's local workforce regions.

The vision of the SWDB is to prepare Missourians to enter the workforce with marketable skills and provide businesses with recruitment assistance to find workers with the skills they need.

The mission of the SWDB is to engage employers, education providers, economic development, and other stakeholders to help the workforce development system achieve the purpose of WIOA and the MPWS's strategic and operational vision, goals, and strategies outlined in the State Plan.

The Board includes high-level management representatives from Missouri's most successful companies, organizations, and government entities. State Board members represent a broad range of perspectives, and each member has a sincere desire to help enhance the workforce system. Board members bring their individual, and sometimes regional, perspectives to board discussions. Members are connected to statewide, local, and regional workforce efforts. This mix of knowledge and skills supports a foundation of perspectives that ensures conversations are meaningful and encourages all members to contribute, especially core program officials.

B. State Board

Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members' organizational affiliations and position titles.

The State Board membership composition contributes to successful efforts in carrying out required functions of the Board. Due to each member's individual perspective and interests in workforce development, comments and dialogue from board members and stakeholders are highly encouraged.

Board members are sincere about their role to assist the governor in the development, implementation, and modification of the state's workforce plan, policies, and performance. As a result, members ensure that discussions during formal meetings include core-related activities that are found in WIOA section 101(d) and include opportunities to get involved with new and innovative workforce initiatives. To support this approach, finalized meeting agendas are developed in cooperation with WIOA combined program leadership, input from the chair, vice chair, requests from any State Board members, requests from state board subcommittees, and other stakeholders as appropriate. Careful review of Board functions is given great consideration during the development of the agenda to ensure that the Board is successfully achieving the critical role of leading and guiding the state's implementation of WIOA.

Agenda items discussed at Board meetings are initially framed by a subject matter expert. The subject matter experts present and discuss elements of the agenda so that all Board members are sufficiently informed and able to confidently develop recommendations and actions for the appropriate state agency.

Board members are updated on operational results of their recommendations and action items during meetings and subcommittee meetings as appropriate. This ensures Board members are able to provide additional recommendations as needed to fulfill their obligations under section WIOA section 101(d).

Board Leadership

Chair: Len Toenjes, Associated General Contractors of Missouri

Vice Chair: Gregg Roberts, Principal Consultant, HR Focus Group, LLC

Executive Director: Julie Carter, Missouri Office of Workforce Development

Board Member

The Honorable Mike Kehoe, Governor, State of Missouri

Business Representatives

Leonard Toenjes, President, Associated General Contractors of Missouri, St. Louis (Construction)

Garland Barton, President, Show Me Workforce Solutions, West Plains (Consulting)

Rob Binney, Vice President, Equity Bank, Lee's Summit (Finance)

Dr. Don W. Cook, Jr., CEO, Capital International Communications, St. Louis (Information Technology)

Herb Dankert, Jarden Plastic Solutions, Springfield (Advanced Manufacturing)

Tracy Henke, COO/Executive Director, Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center St. Louis (AMISTL)

Gregg Roberts, Principal Consultant, HR Focus Group, LLC, St. Joseph (Consulting)

Virgil White, Senior Customer Solutions Manager, Evergy, Kansas City (Utilities)

Labor Representatives

Megan Price, Missouri Works Initiative, St. Louis (Registered Apprenticeships)

Chief Local Elected Officials

Gary Jungermann, Presiding Commissioner of Callaway County, Fulton

State Elected Officials

Senator Kurtis Gregory, Jefferson City

Representative Jeff Coleman, Jefferson City

Community Organizations

Jill Williams, Vice President of Workforce Initiatives, Missouri Hospital Association, Jefferson City

Tony Bryan, Executive Director, Cyber Up, St. Louis

State Agency Representatives

Michelle Hataway, Director, Department of Economic Development

Anna Hui, Director, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Dr. Karla Eslinger, Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Adult Education and Literacy

Dr. Bennett Boggs, Commissioner, Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development

Dr. Chris Clause, Assistant Commissioner, Vocational Rehabilitation

4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

A. Assessment of Core and One-Stop Program Partner Programs.

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

Each core and combined state partner is required by its federal agency to provide performance data annually. Each core partner's respective federal agency sets the target and timeline for WIOA measures. The partners work with their federal agency to meet or exceed Missouri's targets, while working with applicable local and regional entities.

Missouri implemented a job center certification process for comprehensive job centers and affiliates under WIOA. Each site that makes available one or more of the one-stop partners' programs, services, or activities is evaluated based on standards and expectations for service coordination as defined by the SWDB. Certification teams are comprised of one representative from each of the four core partner programs and are charged with conducting independent and objective evaluations. The certification process includes onsite evaluations that incorporate interviews with job center leaders and evaluation of customer satisfaction surveys, documentation required for state and federal compliance, and physical and programmatic accessibility.

The one-stop certification process is conducted at least once every three years, and review of certification criteria occurs every two years as part of the review and modification of the WIOA State Plan. The team charged with reviewing the certification criteria is comprised of core and combined state plan partner representatives who examine the certification criteria to ensure it is a

comprehensive and pragmatic approach to determining customer satisfaction, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement.

The WIOA partnership assesses the progress of meeting its performance goals by looking at performance on a regular basis. While the partners have the ability to look at most of these on a monthly basis, the intention is to view a subset of the following measures monthly and all of them on a quarterly basis. This includes whether the targets are met for the following:

- the WIOA common measures: Employment (Q2 and Q4), Earnings, Credential attainment, Measurable Skill Gains, and Employer Effectiveness;
- total customers to be served;
- rate of achieving performance targets (percent of goal attained) and any anomalies in the data; and
- whether or not the actual data are meeting accuracy of forecasted data.

Adult Education and Literacy aligns its goals with those of the MPWS through the WIOA Steering Committee, sub-committees, and the local workforce planning process. The MPWS firmly commits to helping local adult education programs provide the highest quality student services. In addition to required annual performance reporting, AEL staff provide continuous monitoring, evaluation, and technical assistance to help improve outcomes, share resources, and grow adult education opportunities based on the needs of the state.

Using a four-component monitoring system, AEL conducts ongoing real-time assessments of local AEL service providers and statewide impact.

1. Desk Review: State staff conducts monthly desk reviews analyzing each local program's performance data to see areas of achievement and risk. With growing access to virtual meetings, the MPWS hosts one-on-one discussions of desk review findings with local AEL service providers. These conversations lead to a deeper understanding of individual program difficulties, provide personalized technical assistance based on performance numbers, and allow for sharing of promising practices.
2. Self-Assessment: Based upon a risk assessment, local programs must submit a self-assessment to state staff, ensuring compliance with grant/contract requirements.
3. Onsite Monitoring: AEL regularly evaluates the quality of providers onsite each year based on a revolving schedule and risk assessment. The reviews ensure that local programs follow state and federal guidelines, performance measures are on target, program operations are efficient, and instruction is effective.

In addition to mentoring from visiting local program staff, onsite reviews include:

- a. fiscal/program management and reporting;
- b. teacher certification and professional development requirements;
- c. data entry and management;

- d. student assessment procedures;
- e. student intake and orientation process;
- f. teaching/classroom observation;
- g. instruction;
- h. recruitment and retention;
- i. facilities;
- j. local program policies; and
- k. documentation and record retention requirements.

4. Corrective Action: If monitoring reveals areas of noncompliance or concern, the local service provider must submit a corrective action plan for approval by AEL.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) assesses its performance based upon the WIOA common performance measures as well as agency goals and objectives. The MVR executive leadership team along with district office management reviews performance data on a monthly basis to determine progress toward goals and opportunities for improvement. MVR's case services and financial services work in tandem evaluating performance data for short- and long-term decision making. In addition, MVR's statewide quality assurance team evaluates case management providing guidance on program performance. MVR utilizes the results of its monthly customer satisfaction surveys to evaluate its program performance. The feedback is shared with the executive leadership team, management, supervisors, and staff. It is used as a tool to improve services, evaluate staff performance, and determine training needs.

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind's Analytics and Quality Assurance Manager conducts annual case reviews to monitor performance, compliance, and case management services.

Department of Social Services Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives' Performance Monitoring Unit is responsible for monitoring employment and training providers to ensure providers are utilizing federal funds for their intended purpose and outcomes. In addition, programmatic monitoring is completed to ensure providers are adhering to their contracts and other program requirements. Programs such as SkillUP and Jobs League, conduct self-monitoring on 20 percent of their cases, while other programs like Missouri Work Assistance (MWA), are required to self-monitor two cases per case manager per month.

Along with program monitoring, programs report measures through federal reporting and legislative funding requests that are gathered in the DSS Budget Book.

Community Services Block Grant eligible entities are monitored triennially with a full onsite review and annually for organizational standards. Follow-up reviews, including return visits, are performed for those entities that failed to meet state goals, standards, and requirements, and other reviews as appropriate.

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program (JVSG) serves eligible individuals primarily referred internally by WP staff for individualized career services. Individuals are screened for JVSG eligibility at the intake point using either the Veteran Eligibility Screening Tool or MIS. Individuals who are determined both eligible for and interested in individualized career services from a

DVOP/CODL are referred electronically through the state's management information system (MIS). This referral may be combined with a warm hand off at the Job Center. Once a strategy has been developed to overcome the individual's barriers to employment, referrals to supportive programs can be made through the MIS or a warm hand off to other one-stop partners.

In accordance with VPL 01-25, USDOL VETS audits Missouri's JVSG program within a three-fiscal-year period ("triennial audit cycle"), and each period is separated by a one-year pause ("pause year"). The audit includes onsite, virtual, and/or telephonic site visits at Missouri Job Centers where JVSG staff are assigned. During the audits, VETS staff review documents, such as position descriptions, policies, and standard operating procedures. They require access to both active and closed participant case files. In addition, they interview staff and managers in Job Centers and at the leadership level.

Quarterly, a VETS-403 JVSG Technical Performance Narrative (TPN) is submitted to DOL with performance metrics in comparison to the negotiated rate. In addition, the Quarterly Veterans Report to the Manager is submitted with the TPN, which shows what has been done to improve performance metrics and outcomes for participants.

Missouri has also established a monthly internal auditing process to be conducted by both the OWD supervisor and the JVSG Services Coordinator as part of the internal quality assurance process. It uses tools similar to those used by the OWD Compliance Unit to check for compliance with established standards and policies.

B. Previous Assessment Results

For each four-year state plan and state plan modification, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle), in accordance with methods described in 4(A). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

Representatives from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Steering Committee report results of Section 116 performance data to the State Workforce Development Board as do the local workforce development boards (WDB). These results are used to assess program effectiveness of core, one-stop partners. The WIOA Steering Committee uses this data to review trends, look for improvement opportunities, and set program and policy direction. The primary responsibilities of the WIOA Steering Committee are to oversee the execution of the combined state plan, oversee and direct subcommittees focused on plan strategies, and to evaluate partner performance on a quarterly basis to ensure the quality and effectiveness of service delivery to workforce system participants. The committee also utilizes performance outcomes and quality assessment information to implement strategies and best practices to improve any deficiencies.

For PY 2023, OWD achieved the following performance outcomes:

Adult Program

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 74.12% (Goal: 74.00%)

Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit: 74.33% (Goal: 70.00%)

Credential attainment: 56.96% (Goal: 66.50%)

Measurable Skill Gains: 65.96% (Goal: 52.00%)

Dislocated Worker Program

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 75.27% (Goal: 76.00%)

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit: 74.81% (Goal: 74.00%)

Credential Attainment: 65.25% (Goal: 68.00%)

Measurable Skill Gains: 69.28% (Goal: 60.00%)

Youth Program

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 76.19% (Goal: 77.00%)

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit: 79.28% (Goal: 74.50%)

Credential Attainment: 59.42% (Goal: 63.00%)

Measurable Skill Gains: 62.31% (Goal: 45.00%)

Wagner-Peyser

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 71.65% (Goal: 67.00%)

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit: 71.67% (Goal: 69.50%)

For PY 2024 OWD achieved the following performance outcomes:

Adult Program

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 73.49% (Goal: 77.00%)

Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit: 73.42% (Goal: 76.50%)

Credential attainment: 63.95% (Goal: 66.50%)

Measurable Skill Gains: 73.02% (Goal: 57.00%)

Dislocated Worker Program

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 79.86% (Goal: 77.00%)

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit: 80.37% (Goal: 76.50%)

Credential Attainment: 76.92% (Goal: 72.00%)

Measurable Skill Gains: 76.85% (Goal: 64.00%)

Youth Program

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 77.54% (Goal: 80.00%)

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit: 77.32% (Goal: 78.00%)

Credential Attainment: 65.24% (Goal: 63.50%)

Measurable Skill Gains: 65.42% (Goal: 53.00%)

Wagner-Peyser

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 69.73% (Goal: 71.50%)

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit: 70.25% (Goal: 69.50%)

Performance on most OWD measures has improved, especially Credential Attainment and Measurable Skills Gain.

At the beginning of PY 2023, OWD moved to an automated process for surveying customers. Twice each week, reports identifying customers that received a staff-assisted service during the week are queried from MoJobs. The reports are securely transferred to Qualtrics, and the survey is emailed to customers. The new version of the survey captures customer sentiments on satisfaction with services provided through the job center as well as the customer experience. Open-ended questions aid in understanding the interaction of customers and staff and help gain information on other services that the customer wishes were offered in the job center.

Data compiled from the surveys is displayed in dashboards. Information is displayed in graphic form using visualizations for measures while word clouds with key words from the comments complement the graphics. Full comments are displayed for key questions of services the customer wishes were available and for the customer to provide any feedback on the interaction. Dashboards are available on-demand to supervisors and partners designated by the local workforce board director.

The new process has achieved several goals. Since staff no longer send the survey, OWD ensures that all customers with an email that received a staff-assisted service will have the opportunity to provide feedback. The process is more efficient since staff no longer spend time sending messages to customers, allowing more focus on the customer.

Customer satisfaction with OWD Job Center interactions has increased in PY 2024 compared to PY 2023. Job seeker satisfaction increased from 86 percent in PY 2023 to 88 percent in PY 2024 while employer satisfaction increased from 83 percent in PY 2023 to 84 percent in PY 2024.

For PY 2023, the JVSG program achieved the following performance:

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 54.8% (Goal: 59.0%)

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit: 54.9% (Goal: 57.00%)

Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit: \$8,096 (Goal: \$6,000)

For PY 2022, the JVSG program achieved the following performance:

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: 58.32% (Goal: 59.00%)

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit: 58.84% (Goal: 57.00%)

Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit: \$8,158 (Goal: \$6,000)

An assessment of JVSG performance indicated that Missouri missed the employment 2nd and 4th quarter goals by 3 – 4 percent each of the last two quarters of 2023. They have, however, exceeded the median earnings goal by approximately \$2,000 in both quarters.

CSBG, SNAP, and TANF meet the federal reporting requirements to their federal partners, but do not report similar WIOA assessments as the core partners. OWCI is currently in the process of drafting measurements, determining program specific outcomes, and attempting to align assessments with the core partners to meet similar results. This process is under internal review and will need an analysis period to evaluate effectiveness.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) use the required performance indicators found in Section 116 of the Act for program evaluation along with the other core partners in the MPWS. The review and analysis of this quarterly data is a valuable assessment tool and aids MVR and RSB in determining goal attainment as well as providing the opportunity for comparison across core partner agencies. MVR and RSB have adjusted their case management systems to support the common performance measures.

MVR's and RSB's actual performance outcomes for PY 2023 and PY 2024 are listed below except for RSB's PY 2024 outcomes, which are not available currently.

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit

MVR	PY 2023: 64.6%	PY 2024: 62.8%
RSB	PY 2023: 68.3%	PY 2024: NA
Combined	PY 2023: 64.8%	PY 2024: 62.9%

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit

MVR	PY 2023: 62.4%	PY 2024: 60.5%
RSB	PY 2023: 64.2%	PY 2024: NA
Combined	PY 2023: 62.5%	PY 2024: 60.5%

Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit

MVR	PY 2023: \$5,204	PY 2024: \$6,173
RSB	PY 2023: \$7,470	PY 2024: NA
Combined	PY 2023: \$5,301	PY 2024: \$6,860

Credential Attainment Rate

MVR	PY 2023: 60.5%	PY 2024: 57.9%
RSB	PY 2023: 55.4%	PY 2024: NA
Combined	PY 2023: 61.1%	PY 2024: 59.6%

Measurable Skill Gains

MVR	PY 2023: 76.1%	PY 2024: 70.9%
RSB	PY 2023: 75.5%	PY 2024: NA
Combined	PY 2023: 75.6%	PY 2024: 70.3%

On February 23, 2024, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education issued a final rule defining the sixth performance indicator, Effectiveness in Serving Employers, as “Retention with the Same Employer.” Each state must report an annual aggregated and unduplicated performance result for PY 2024, across the six WIOA core programs.

During PY 2023 and 2024 MVR’s customer satisfaction results continue to reflect positive performance with rates at 85 percent and higher for the following five areas of service: staff availability, courteous and respectful treatment by staff, purpose of MVR services explained, counselor helped customers plan services, and service choices were explained.

Upon assessment of enrollment data since the 2020 State Plan, the MPWS noticed decreased enrollment in all programs. From 2018-2019 to 2020-2021, AEL enrollment decreased by 50 percent. The MPWS evaluated student barriers and demographics identifying trends. That assessment prompted the MPWS to innovate AEL service delivery, meeting adult students where they are. Trends include barriers to employment, specifically transportation and childcare, and dramatic growth in the proportion of students seeking English language proficiency.

To address access barriers to AEL programming, the MPWS updated its distance education delivery, funding all local service providers to offer virtual education for the first time in 2022. With careful monitoring to ensure equitable opportunities for educational growth, all AEL programs in Missouri now have a virtual option with comparable measurable skill gains to in-person classes. The MPWS also expanded AEL class sites in employer facilities to assist adults with educational attainment and English acquisition. Seeing an increase of 11 percent from 2020-2021 in the proportion of adult students needing English proficiency, the MPWS expanded Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education providers and created targeted professional development for English language educators. Since implementing these initiatives to address assessed changes in Missouri’s workforce needs, the MPWS has increased total AEL enrollment by 56 percent since the low in 2020-2021 and expects to recover to pre-pandemic rates by 2027.

Moving forward, progress toward these outcomes will be evaluated by the partners through the WIOA Steering committee.

C. Evaluation

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects of activities carried out in the State under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)).

Though each partner member of the MPWS employs evaluation methods for their own programs, the MPWS is assessing evaluation process models that can be utilized across WIOA core programs to coordinate with, and be designed in conjunction with, state and local boards and with state agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs.

A team of individuals representing state and local WIOA partners guides the evaluation process. The team participated in the 2022 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC) to learn how to build evaluation projects based on an evidence-based framework. The team created a list of research questions to determine how customers could be served most effectively.

The first project, An Evaluation of Barriers: How Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Services Affect Employment Outcomes, was completed in PY 2023. The research focuses on barriers identified by Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, and WIOA Youth participants, the types of services provided to individuals with barriers, and how outcomes may be affected based on the services. The analysis confirms that a significantly higher number of individuals were employed after receiving services, indicating that the assistance was beneficial to Missourians becoming employed, reemployed, and/or advancing career opportunities.

The project completed in PY 2024, Key Trends in Changing Customer Characteristics: Missouri Evaluation, explores how the typical job center customer has changed over time. Key takeaways from the research were discussed with job center staff members as a way to verify the research with their experiences, as well as discuss best practices for serving today's customer.

The MPWS intends to use the results to improve performance measures under WIOA Section 116 (e) thereby strengthening Missouri's workforce system, as well as providing accountability.

Any additional selected research and improvement projects are aligned with the strategies in this combined plan and monitored by the WIOA Steering Committee. This committee assesses the needs of the MPWS to recommend any areas for analysis or improvements. These projects are presented to and approved by the WIOA Steering Committee, any additional core partner leadership, the SWDB and coordinated as necessary with the Secretaries of appropriate federal departments.

5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. For Title I Programs

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

i. Youth Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3)

The State of Missouri uses the formula outlined in Section 128(b) for allocation of youth funds not set aside for statewide purposes. The formula is three equal parts: relative share of the average number of individuals unemployed in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASU), relative share of the number of excess unemployed individuals, and relative share of the number of economically disadvantaged youth.

The Youth allocation has a hold harmless provision based on 90 percent of the average prior two year's relative share. The funds allocated to local areas are determined using data provided to Office of Workforce Development by the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center.

The State of Missouri reserves the right to utilize the alternative allocation methodologies outlined in WIOA but does not currently incorporate any additional data elements. ASU and Excess Unemployed are defined in detail in WIOA but generally refer to unemployment rates of 6.5 percent and 4.5 percent respectively.

ii. Adult and Training Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3)

The State of Missouri uses the formula outlined in Section 133 (b)(2)(A)(i) for allocation of adult funds not set aside for statewide purposes. The formula is three equal parts similar to the youth allocation: relative share of individuals unemployed in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASU), relative share of excess unemployed individuals, and relative share of economically disadvantaged adults.

The Adult allocation has a hold harmless provision based on 90 percent of the average prior two year's relative share. The funds allocated to local areas are determined using data provided to Office of Workforce Development by MERIC.

ASU and Excess Unemployed are defined in detail in WIOA but generally refer to unemployment rates of 6.5 percent and 4.5 percent respectively.

iii. Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 133(b)(2) and Based on Data and Weights Assigned

The State of Missouri uses the data categories outlined in Section 133 (b)(2)(B)(ii) for allocation of dislocated worker funds not set-aside for statewide purposes, which includes rapid response activities. The data categories are insured unemployment data (average number unemployed based on UI records), unemployment concentrations (unemployed in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASU)), plant closing and mass layoff data (from WARN and non-WARN layoffs), declining industries data (summary of employment losses for prior 2 years), farmer/rancher economic hardship data (when an appropriate data source can be identified in consultation with the Missouri

Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC)), and long-term unemployment data (long-term unemployed).

The dislocated worker allocation has a hold harmless provision based on 90 percent of the average prior two year's relative share.

The funds allocated to local areas are determined using data provided to OWD by MERIC.

The State of Missouri reserves the right to utilize the alternate allocation methodologies outlined in WIOA but does not currently incorporate any additional data elements.

ASU and Excess Unemployed are defined in detail in WIOA but generally refer to unemployment rates of 6.5 percent and 4.5 percent respectively.

B. For Title II

i. Describe the methods and factors the eligible agency will use to distribute title II funds.

The MPWS distributes AEL funds through a three-year competitive grant/contract cycle completed in May 2023. Eligible service providers within the state are funded, enabling the development, implementation, and improvement of local adult education and literacy activities. Applications are competitive, open, and available to all eligible applicants. AEL awards grant/contract allocations for one year, with two one-year renewal opportunities based on program performance and available funding.

Eligible service providers must use the funding to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities and English language acquisition concurrently with civics and workplace training for the MPWS.

Through the competitive grant process, the MPWS ensures that:

1. all eligible service providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants/contracts;
2. all eligible service providers experience the same grant/contract announcement and application process; and
3. all eligible service providers must only use funds awarded by the MPWS through grants/contracts for adult education and literacy activities.

Available funding is divided among Local Workforce Regions, allowing the MPWS to ensure equitably distributed AEL service delivery to Missouri residents. Utilizing MERIC demographic data, which counts the number of residents in each Missouri county without a secondary credential and those who are English learners, the MPWS determines the proportion of need for each county and then assigns a corresponding funding proportion to each of the appropriate LWDBs. The MPWS designates each AEL provider applicant to geographically relevant LWDBs, including the geographic need distribution in the funding formula.

The MPWS determines AEL allocations based on the ranking of applications received, which is determined by scoring the applications. The standardized scoring scale includes regional needs

based on MERIC data, prior performance, budget, program operations, and alignment with the local workforce and WIOA partnerships. Local programs offer virtual classes to fill geographic gaps, and the state sponsors MOLeads, a virtual platform for adult basic/secondary education provided statewide.

In compliance with 34 CFR part 463 Subpart C, when awarding grants or contracts for adult education and literacy activities to eligible service providers, the MPWS considers the following:

1. The degree to which the eligible provider is responsive to:
 - a. regional needs as identified in the local workforce development plan; and
 - b. serving individuals in the community who are identified in such plan as the most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills or are English language learners.
2. The ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities;
3. The past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, especially those individuals who have low levels of literacy, and the degree to which those improvements contribute to meeting the state's adjusted levels of performance for the primary performance indicators;
4. The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under section 108 of WIOA, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners;
5. Whether the eligible provider's program:
 - a. is of sufficient intensity and quality and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and
 - b. uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction;
6. Whether the eligible provider's activities, including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice;
7. Whether the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education, in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning, and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance;
8. Whether the eligible provider's activities offer learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

9. Whether the eligible provider's activities are delivered by instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by Missouri, where applicable, and who have access to high-quality professional development, including through electronic means;

10. Whether the eligible provider coordinates with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community to develop career pathways, such as by establishing strong links with elementary and secondary schools; postsecondary educational institutions; institutions of higher education; local WDBs; one-stop centers; job training programs and social service agencies; business; industry; labor organizations; community-based organizations; nonprofit organizations; and intermediaries;

11. Whether the eligible provider's activities offer the flexible schedules and coordination with federal, state, and local support services, such as childcare, transportation, mental health services, and career planning, that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

12. Whether the eligible provider will enter data and use reports from LACES (student data management information system) and monitor program performance; and

13. Whether the local area in which the eligible provider is located has a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

Within its grant/contract competition, the MPWS requires the submission of all applications for AEL funds to the appropriate local WDBs for review.

The process includes:

1. submission of the applications to the appropriate local WDB for its review of consistency with the local plan within a reasonable timeframe; and
2. an opportunity for the local WDB to make recommendations to AEL that promote alignment with the local plan.

Missouri considers the local WDB review results to determine the extent to which the application addresses the required considerations. Eligible providers seeking a grant/contract must submit an application to the MPWS containing information and assurances, including:

1. a description of how funds awarded under this title will be spent consistent with the requirements of AEFLA, Title II of WIOA;
2. a description of any cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities;
3. a description of how the eligible provider will deliver services in alignment with the local workforce development plan, including how such provider will promote co-enrollment in programs and activities under Title I as appropriate;
4. a description of how the eligible provider will meet the state-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance;

5. a description of how the eligible provider will fulfill, as appropriate, required one-stop partner responsibilities to:
 - a. provide access through the one-stop delivery system to adult education and literacy activities;
 - b. in accordance with the methods agreed upon by the local WDB and described in the memorandum of understanding, use a portion of the funds made available under the Act to maintain the one-stop delivery system, including payment of the infrastructure costs for the one-stop centers, where appropriate;
 - c. enter into a local memorandum of understanding with the local WDB relating to the operations of the one-stop system;
 - d. participate in the operation of the one-stop system consistent with the terms of the memorandum of understanding, and the requirements of WIOA; and
 - e. have a willingness to provide representation to the local WDB if asked by the state agency;
6. a description of how the eligible provider will deliver services in a manner that meets the needs of eligible individuals;
7. information that addresses the 13 considerations; and
8. documentation of the activities required for local board review.

In addition to geographic need as determined by MERIC data and grant scores, the MPWS includes proposed cost per student, proposed enrollment, and Labor Market Information (LMI) as it pertains to Integrated Education and Training (IET) programming in its AEL funding formula.

Only organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities may apply for a grant/contract. These organizations may include, but are not limited to:

- a local educational agency;
- a community-based organization or faith-based organization;
- a volunteer literacy organization;
- an institution of higher education;
- a public or private nonprofit agency;
- a library;
- a public housing authority;
- a nonprofit institution that is not described above and has the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals;
- a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
- a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

To demonstrate past effectiveness, an eligible provider must provide past performance data that includes skills improvement of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language

acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the state's application for funds.

An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

There are two ways in which an eligible provider may meet the requirements of this section:

1. AEL considers the provider's past performance that has been previously funded under Title II of WIOA, including performance data required under Section 116 of WIOA to demonstrate past effectiveness.
2. Eligible providers not previously funded under Title II of WIOA must provide performance data to demonstrate past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of success in achieving outcomes listed in this section.

Timeline: The January-July 2026 timeline below is an estimate and subject to change.

- December: Invitation for Bid announcement in newspaper and website
- Late January: Pre-Bid Conference
- February-March: technical assistance provided to potential bidders
- Late March: bids due
- April: evaluate, score, and slate bids
- May: announce allocations
- July 1, 2026: begin AEL grant/contract cycle.

ii. Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

The MPWS ensures direct access to all eligible AEL providers in the state who require an application for a grant/contract. Eligible service providers submit applications directly to AEL and are not required to apply through another agency or agencies in a multi-tiered process. The direct application process pertains regardless of whether an applicant is awarded funds, is a grantee or a contractor.

The MPWS publishes a notice of program and funds available on their website and directly sends it to anyone placing a request. The Missouri Office of Administration has established guidelines and procedures for selecting and awarding grants/contracts, which AEL must follow.

AEL uses an identical grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers. Access to the grant or contract bid specifications is only available through AEL.MO.GOV, ensuring all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants or contracts. All eligible providers must use the same application process. All applications are evaluated using an equal rubric and scoring criteria.

C. Vocational Rehabilitation Program

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

The distribution of funds as confirmed by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is 87 percent for Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation and 13 percent for Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind.

6. Program Data

A. Data Alignment and Integration

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State's process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.

i. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation

OWD provides WIOA core partners access to their MoJobs case management system. This affords any partner the opportunity to access customer information to assist with common intake, referrals, and sharing of information between agencies. The SkillUP employment program, offered by DSS Work and Community Programs, not only utilizes MoJobs in this manner, but it also collaborates with OWD to purchase their own performance module through the system vendor, GeoSol. This type of alignment and integration effort assists in advancing service delivery to TANF participants and other low-income individuals.

DHEWD was charged in 2023 with administering the state's longitudinal P20W data system. A dedicated team works with partner agencies to link data across (P)reschool / early childhood through K-12 education and all avenues of postsecondary education and training ("Grade 20") into the (W)orkforce.

The purpose of P20W data systems is to allow stakeholders to use existing data, de-identified for privacy and confidentiality, to better understand pathways, programs, and policies that support the education-to-workforce journey. Users will be able to answer research questions and conduct

program and policy evaluation that requires cross-sector data, such as factors supporting successful transitions from early childhood to K-12 to higher education and training programs and into the workforce, or the impact of social services and other programs on success in education and training or workforce programs. The public will also have new tools to make informed decisions about education and training pathways, program outcomes, and career choices.

While Missouri has worked on P20W data integration on an ad hoc basis for over a decade, dedicated staff and resources have accelerated the work. Significant progress has been made since 2023 on additional data integration (including public workforce participant and apprenticeship data) as well as data governance work which will enable partner agency Data Stewards and Approved External (non-state) Users to propose projects and responsibly use the data. Missouri has also had, for over a decade, a multi-agency data-sharing agreement, and the next iteration is currently out for review. This supports the state plan goals for data integration.

ii. Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan

A maturing P20W data system will enable more sophisticated and extensive program evaluation and outcomes analysis, but specifically, users will be able to track and better understand the impact of co-enrollment or sequential completion across multiple training or credential programs, e.g. outcomes for participants who enrolled in community college and completed an apprenticeship, or who participated in workforce training while incarcerated. The impact and participation in SNAP or TANF could also be measured before, during, and after training program participation. A system to evaluate potential programs to assist individuals has been made available. When the customer enters information, the system will generate a list of possible potential programs based on the individual's situation and needs.

iii. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals

P20W data systems securely and privately connect statewide information from early childhood through K-12 education, postsecondary education, the workforce, social and human services, enabling cross-sector data insights to help users evaluate policies and programs, spot trends, and figure out what works in supporting successful transitions for Missourians along their education and workforce journeys.

OWD provides WIOA core partners access to their MoJobs case management system. This affords any partner the opportunity to access customer information to assist with common intake, referrals, and sharing of information between agencies. The SkillUP employment program, offered by DSS OWCI programs, not only utilizes MoJobs in this manner, but it also collaborated with OWD to purchase their own performance module through the system vendor, GeoSol. This type of

alignment and integration effort assists in advancing service delivery to TA participants and other low-income individuals.

iv. Describe the State's data systems and procedures to produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

Core partners are able to meet the obligation to submit the performance data required on time.

B. Assessment of Participants' Post-program Success

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

Missouri will use the workforce development system to assess exiters from core programs using direct results or proxy determinations depending upon the core program. The data for entering, persisting, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment will be the factors produced for each core program. Missouri will not set additional indicators.

Each core program and combined state plan partner uses data matching or self-reported information to determine employment performance. Exiting participants are matched for employment using Unemployment Insurance wage credits or the data system is updated with self-reported data for second and fourth quarter employment.

Secondary and postsecondary attainment of exited participants are matched with the High School Equivalency (HSE) records, high school diploma records, postsecondary records available from the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, and the National Student Clearinghouse or other appropriate documentation must be produced by the participant.

Missouri now has staff and resources dedicated to expanding and administering a P20W longitudinal data system, which will provide a secure environment linking data across education and training domains. Significant progress has been made since 2023 on additional data integration (including public workforce participant and apprenticeship data).

The P20W team also regularly convenes an interagency Data Governance Committee of Data Stewards representing partner agencies, as well as an Executive Advisory Committee of Cabinet leaders to provide strategic direction and data governance enabling responsible use by state and external users. These entities, in addition to the state's WIOA Steering Committee, can work to ensure WIOA evaluation is visible as the P20W system continues to develop.

C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Missouri's workforce performance data system for reports and queries, as well as its SLDS, were designed from inception to use aggregated UI Wage Record Data. These systems use an automated, daily, overnight data load of aggregate UI Wage Record Data matched to workforce participant data. The use of aggregated wage record data ensures adherence to confidentiality and disclosure provisions within UI law.

D. Privacy Safeguards

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

The privacy safeguards incorporated in Missouri's workforce development system ensure adherence to confidentiality and disclosure provisions for state Unemployment Compensation (UC) information and the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). These privacy considerations are embraced within the state workforce development system in three significant ways:

1. any access to such data is only by an employee of the State of Missouri and through the respective state agencies' human resources unit; each agency has agreed to adherence to confidentiality considerations of participant data as a term of employment;
2. any access to such data is limited only to persons having been trained in the access, use, and application of confidential participant data using respective agencies' confidentiality training; and
3. adherence to the use of aggregate data in the analysis and evaluation of participant data means the system complies with confidentiality and disclosure provisions under FERPA and the UC program.

7. Priority of Service for Veterans.

A. Describe how the State will implement the priority of service provisions for covered persons in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor.

B. Describe how the State will monitor priority of service provisions for veterans.

C. Describe the triage and referral process for eligible veterans and other populations determined eligible to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist/Consolidated Position.

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) requires compliance with Title 38, Chapters 41 and 42, in that all service delivery points of the grantee will provide veterans' priority of service in the provision of all labor-exchange services, and specifically when making referrals for job openings and training opportunities. Veterans and eligible persons are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job training program.

Only eligible veterans and eligible persons, who have been screened and determined both eligible for and interested in individualized career service AND who possess a qualifying employment

barrier (QEB), will be referred to the DVOP/CODL. All others will still be served using WIOA Priority of Service standards.

All programs administered in the Job Center are monitored to ensure that programs provide the required priority of service to veterans. Whenever necessary, corrective action plans will be developed and appropriate technical assistance concerning priority of service to veterans will be provided. The agreement reached between USDOL, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), and the state will be the governing agreement for veterans' services within the job centers where funding is used to provide services to the state's veteran customers.

When a veteran or eligible person enters the job center, they are met at the front desk via a job center staff person or a check-in kiosk. They are verbally or electronically asked specific questions to determine if they have veteran or eligible person status. If the individual is identified as a veteran, spouse, or active military, they would immediately be placed at the front of the queue and be served by the next available staff member. Signage is also posted within the job center making veterans and eligible persons aware of Priority of Service. Missouri implements the priority of service by issuing guidance to all workforce system staff and providing regular ongoing training to all job center staff. Missouri provides regular quarterly updates to all offices to ensure that Missouri is adhering to priority of service guidelines. Missouri monitors priority of service through its compliance and monitoring team as well as office visits from the Veteran Program Coordinator. If any issues are discovered, they will be addressed by the Veteran Program Coordinator and the compliance and monitoring team. DVOP and CODL staff provide services to QEB veterans. LVER staff and CODL work with employers and create job opportunities for veterans.

DVOPs and CODLs work in a team approach to serve veterans with Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEBs). They coordinate their efforts by communicating with other job center staff if the veteran is enrolled in other USDOL programs, in addition they coordinate with outside service organizations to provide services to the QEB veteran.

Missouri utilizes a screening process to refer QEB veterans to DVOP and CODL staff. Once job centers conduct an initial assessment, they are referred to the DVOP or CODL staff for individualized career services. DVOP and CODL work with community partners to identify QEB veterans when they are conducting outreach. Once a QEB veteran is referred, veterans staff provide individualized career services.

8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

Missouri has a committee specifically focused on one-stop certification criteria. The committee established the criteria for certification, including accessibility. This committee includes representatives from Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, and the Centers for Independent Living that assist with training and technical assistance to ensure accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. Accessibility criteria for certification include the requirements contained in Section 188, which includes policy review, adaptive technology equipment availability, and emergency procedures.

The State Equal Opportunity Officer coordinates training for Local Equal Opportunity Officers and other partner staff, which includes Vocational Rehabilitation staff, to bring awareness to WIOA Section 188 requirements. The Missouri's Nondiscrimination Plan describes how the state will conduct annual monitoring for each local workforce development region to ensure compliance with WIOA Section 188, 29 CFR 38, and the Missouri Nondiscrimination Plan.

OWD Issuance 12-2017 "Minimum Standards for Assistive Technologies in Missouri Job Centers," provides guidance for basic assistive technology at each job center. In 2018, a survey of all job centers was completed that provided additional information on the strides made to make every job center accessible for individuals with disabilities. In 2019, OWD began the process of upgrading and modernizing the assistive technology in the job centers. This included the installation of Windows 10, which has many built-in accessibility features, as well as large monitors, hydraulic arms, webcams, document cameras, alternate keyboards, height adjustable tables, headsets, magnifier software, narrator software, and ipTTY software training for all staff on utilizing assistive technology include both online and classroom classes.

Policy guidelines for one-stop certification were updated and issued in 2023. Included in the issuance are criteria for programmatic and physical accessibility. Onsite reviewers were provided an extensive checklist to confirm that every job center meets WIOA standards of programmatic and physical accessibility.

9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. Describe how English language learners will be made aware of the opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible.

OWD and its local WDBs are obligated to provide affirmative outreach (formerly universal access) to programs, services, and activities as required in Section 188 of WIOA. OWD and its recipients are responsible for taking the appropriate affirmative outreach steps to ensure equal access to programs and services that include outreaching to various groups protected by Section 188 of WIOA including, but not limited to, persons of different sexes, various racial and ethnic/national origin groups, various religions, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and individuals in different age groups.

OWD and its recipients are committed to including a diverse demographic group in all of its programs and services, which include gender, various racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities and different age groups. The nondiscrimination and equal opportunity performance is measured by conducting an annual statistical data analysis utilizing the 4/5th rule and the 2-standard deviation test on all programs, services, activities, and employment practices associated with Missouri's workforce system.

Some outreach strategies include, but are not limited to, advertising in community newsletters, newspapers, radio stations, or any other media that could reach targeted populations. This includes sending notices about job openings to schools, local colleges, and community service groups about services and activities offered in the job centers. OWD and its recipients routinely communicate and consult with schools, community groups, and advocacy organizations.

OWD and its recipients are required to conduct an annual data analysis of programs, services, and employment practices. This annual assessment compares the workforce data of jobseekers utilizing job centers with Missouri's civilian labor force. The results of this analysis are used to determine future performance goals for the state and its recipients as well as an outreach plan. The outreach plan includes OWD and its recipients identifying current and potential partners such as other government agencies, community-based organizations, nonprofits, and private businesses and organizations that are current WIOA core and combined state plan partners as well as those who could become partners.

Recommendations are developed based on the data analysis for improving outreach, services and service delivery, as well as labor market strategies. The outreach strategies are intended to be methodologies for making contact with all segments of the population in the local service area, especially those who are currently underserved. The labor market strategies include devising techniques to stimulate the local economy; therefore, generating more employment and skills training opportunities for Missouri jobseekers. Based on the results of the data analysis assessment, the state and its recipients are able to develop outreach and recruitment plans to broaden the pool of those groups for whom the assessment indicates there should be higher levels of employment and participation in programs and services.

The regional language study may show that there are large groups of people in a local workforce development area who do not speak English or who have very limited proficiency in the language. OWD and its recipients may find local populations that include large groups of people who speak and communicate only in a language other than English. In this case, clearly, a plan should be developed to reach, communicate with, and improve services to those non-English speaking populations.

Effective January 3, 2019, WIOA recipients must also record the limited English proficiency (LEP) and preferred language of each applicant, registrant, participant, and ~~termin~~^{ee}. Such information must be stored in a manner that ensures confidentiality, and must be used only for the purposes of recordkeeping and reporting, determining eligibility, where appropriate, for WIOA Title I-financially assisted programs or activities, determining the extent to which the recipient is

operating its WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity in a nondiscriminatory manner, or other use authorized by law.

OWD and its WIOA recipients must conduct an assessment of the language needs in each service area. The assessment must involve the identification of the languages that are likely to be encountered in the provider's service area, estimating the number of LEP individuals who are eligible to receive services or benefits who are directly affected by the provider's program or activity. It is required that the following four factors are considered to determine the nature of language assistance provided and to ensure the most effective, meaningful access for LEP individuals, participating in or seeking benefits from, the program or activity:

1. The number or proportion of LEP individuals served or encountered in the eligible service population or likely to be directly or significantly affected by program or activity;
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program or activity;
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient; and
4. The resources available to the recipient and costs in carrying out the program or activity.

OWD and its recipients must consider the scope of the program or activity for which the population is eligible, the size and concentration of the population that needs services or information and take reasonable steps to provide services and information in the appropriate languages. This includes making the "Equal Opportunity is the Law" (EO) Notice, brochures, and other materials considered communications available in various language translations. If there is not a large group of non-English speaking people in the local workforce development area, OWD and its recipients are obligated to take reasonable steps to meet the language needs of that person(s). OWD and its recipients provide training to staff to utilize the language line, Language Link, to accommodate customers who are limited in English proficiency. OWD and its recipients also train staff on how to utilize translation and interpreting services.

OWD is in partnership with the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and provides the EO Notice in braille and large print formats as well as online for customers with low vision or who are blind. This helps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.

OWD partners with MERIC to provide ongoing analysis of population groups in Missouri that include different characteristics. These analyses assist local WDBs and regions on how to recruit and target populations that are underserved in the workforce system.

OWD and its recipients are expected to meet the needs of their customers by ensuring affirmative outreach to their programs, services, and activities for all eligible individuals. OWD and its recipients promote affirmative outreach by understanding the local needs, marketing programs and services and providing outreach in the communities served. These are accomplished by involving community groups and schools in planning, collaborating with partners, training staff, and ensuring equal and effective service delivery for all individuals.

OWD is in partnership with Adult Education and Literacy and refers English language learners to them for classes in English. This helps to ensure clients improve their economic potential as well as their ability to function in Missouri's society.

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

The MPWS ensures joint planning and coordination among all partners through several different strategies. For example, the WIOA Steering Committee oversees specialized ad hoc subcommittees, which are aligned with the combined plan strategies. These include data integration, youth, and employer engagement. An ad hoc one-stop certification team also meets around that process every three years. The committees represent core and required partners, as well as additional state and community partners to assist in carrying out the MPWS's vision and goals.

Each quarter, the partners host a Statewide Partnership meeting. This meeting brings together state agencies, local board directors, and provider staff. The meeting agenda provides updates on local and statewide activities and profiles invited guests who present on their particular initiatives. These quarterly gatherings not only serve as information sharing meetings but also provide the opportunity for the MPWS to engage in joint planning.

The WIOA Steering Committee sets priorities and forms strategies to improve the MPWS based on the Combined State Plan. Work groups comprised of staff from partner agencies collaborate, make recommendations, and implement solutions to benefit Missourians as they participate in the public workforce system to reach career goals.

Core partners participate in the review and approval of local plans and local plan modifications. As part of this process, partners ensure their programs are well-represented at the local level. They have input in the planning activities allowing for alignment of services at the state and local levels. This type of participation is beneficial in terms of eliminating service program silos.

As part of the MPWS, there are countless opportunities for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, required one-stop partner programs, and other programs and activities included in this combined state plan. Some of these opportunities are listed below.

Core partners serve on many cross-agency councils and attend cross-agency meetings, including the Missouri Apprenticeship Team, Nexus groups, and the Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Council. They participate in ad hoc projects that support community-driven needs.

AEL is integral to the collaborative, multi-agency MPWS that leads to employment and postsecondary pathways for adult students. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's commissioner represents AEL and MVR on the SWDB. AEL service providers participate in infrastructure cost-sharing negotiations with LWDBs, resulting in agreements with all partners. AEL supports infrastructure costs for some of its local service providers, while other local programs use in-kind contributions instead of cash. Additionally, 18 local AEL Directors (out of 29)

serve on Missouri's 13 LWDBs, while more than a dozen programs hold classes at One-Stop locations. AEL ensures that all programs inform students at orientation about the MPWS. Local programs also employ career advisors and transition staff who make direct referrals to partner agencies.

MPWS partners serve on the Board of the Missouri Association of Workforce Development, a professional organization focused on networking, sharing of best practices, and holding an annual conference which enhances partnership and collaboration statewide.

The MPWS staff serves as active members on local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and participates in the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with all WDBs. These MOUs direct and explain how partners work together to deliver services to jobseekers in local communities.

Local workforce boards hold partner meetings to develop and review the Memoranda of Understanding and the Infrastructure Funding Agreements. Local boards also host interagency team meetings to address the job center operations.

RSB offers each local board technology assessments to help with accessibility solutions for blind and visually impaired individuals. This includes software assessments, software updating, uninstalling old software, and training on how to access the assistive software.

RSB has also provided Job Center staff training in basic sighted guide techniques to assist blind or visually impaired patrons.

DSS shares benefits and programs with field staff. They host opportunities for partners to connect, learn, and share best practices. DSS hosts monthly provider calls for CSBG contractors, employment and training providers, and staff calls. The different formats allow providers to discuss best case practices, learn policy changes, and ask questions from program staff.

Beginning in February 2022, DSS conducted an informational series called DSS Learning Labs where state agencies and community partners shared high-level program and contact information. The series was open to the public and available for frontline staff at state agencies and community organizations to watch and ask questions. These sessions were recorded and posted online for staff to reference when needed.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (for all core programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;
2.	The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;
3.	The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;
4.	The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;
5.	The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;
6.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);

7.	The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;
8.	The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;
9.	The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;
10.	The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);
11.	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and
12.	Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B. *The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—*

a. General Requirements

1. Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas

A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State
Missouri has two regions:

Greater Kansas City Region: Kansas City and Vicinity, Eastern Jackson County

St. Louis Region: City of St. Louis, County of St. Louis, County of St. Charles, Jefferson Franklin Consortium and Madison and St. Clair counties in Illinois

In Spring 2022, the Northwest and Northeast Workforce Development areas began the process of merging into one region. The process was completed in July 2023, thereby reducing Missouri's local regions to 13. These are listed below, along with the counties they serve.

Central - Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Camden, Cole, Cooper, Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Howard, Laclede, Maries, Miller, Moniteau, Morgan, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski, Washington

East Jackson County - Eastern half of Jackson County

Jefferson/Franklin Consortium - Franklin, Jefferson

Kansas City and Vicinity - Cass, Clay, Western half of Jackson County, Platte, Ray

North - Adair, Andrew, Atchison Buchanan, Caldwell, Clark, Clinton, Daviess, Dekalb, Gentry, Grundy, Harrison, Holt, Knox, Lewis, Lincoln, Linn, Livingston, Macon, Marion, Mercer, Montgomery, Monroe, Nodaway, Pike, Putnam, Ralls, Randolph, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby, Sullivan, Warren, Worth

Ozark - Christian, Dallas, Greene, Polk, Stone, Taney, Webster

South Central - Butler, Carter, Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Reynolds, Ripley, Shannon, Texas, Wayne, Wright

Southeast - Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Dunklin, Iron, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Scott, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard

Southwest - Barry, Barton, Dade, Jasper, Lawrence, McDonald, Newton

St. Charles County – County of St. Charles

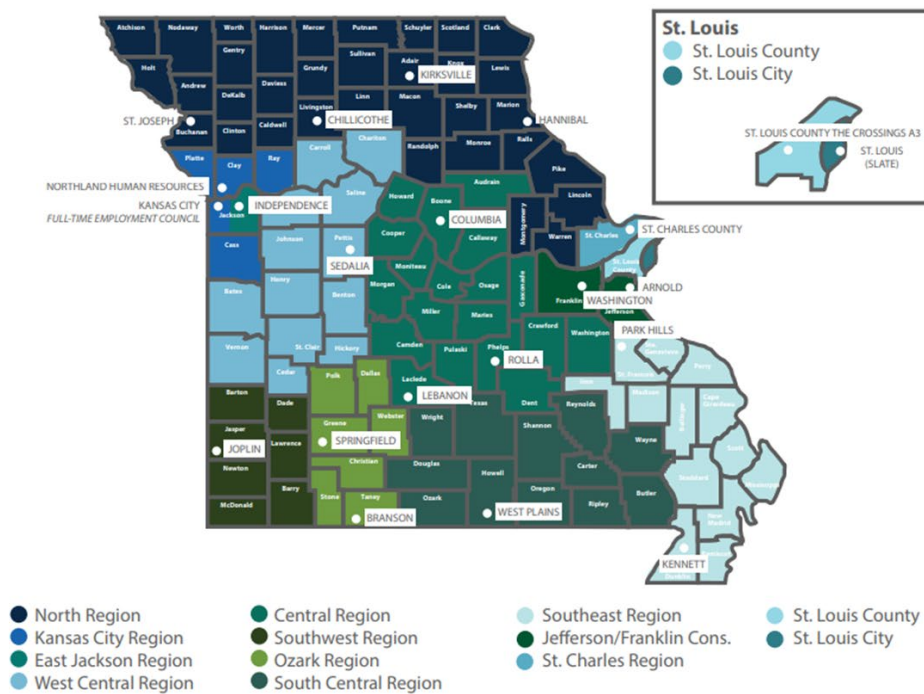
St. Louis City – City of St. Louis

St. Louis County – County of St. Louis

West Central - Bates, Benton, Carroll, Cedar, Chariton, Henry, Hickory, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, Saline, St. Clair, Vernon

MISSOURI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT REGIONS AND JOB CENTERS

MISSOURI OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



For additional information about Missouri Office of Workforce Development services, contact a Missouri Job Center near you. Locations and additional information are available at jobs.mo.gov or (888) 728-JOBS (5627). Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Missouri Relay Services at 711.

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B. Describe the process and policy used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions

Under the provisions of WIOA, Section 106(b)(2) indicates that during the two years after the Act was passed: “....The Governor shall approve a request for initial designation as a local area from any area that was designated as a local area for purposes of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)..... and performed successfully, and sustained fiscal integrity. In Missouri, each local workforce development board previously established under WIA formally requested initial designation as a local area under these provisions. These requests were officially provided from each region in a letter from each region’s Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO).

Each region is assessed by the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) staff as to whether the local area performed successfully on the premise of their successful outcomes in performance measures. Additionally, OWD assesses their overall performance through a Quarterly Performance Review, and through both desktop and on-site monitoring. Finally, OWD contracted with a third-party vendor to assess each region’s fiscal integrity through additional monitoring, and at the beginning of PY 2025 brought the monitoring in-house. This process affords OWD the opportunity to assess each region regarding their “performed successfully” or “sustained fiscal integrity” statuses.

Through OWD and the labor market research of the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), an assessment of a wide range of labor market information was used to define areas most ideally suited for regional planning.

A detailed proposal was prepared in compliance with WIOA Section 106(b)(B) for the consideration of: consistency with labor market areas, consistency with regional economic development areas in the state, and have available resources to effectively administer all activities, including whether the areas have appropriate education and training providers, such as higher education and area career and technical education schools.

This research was shared with local workforce development board (LWDB) directors and their staff, as well as each region’s chief elected officials and local workforce board. This labor market analysis and recommendation for two regional planning areas was presented

to local elected officials attending Missouri's Sector Strategies "kick-off" meeting and openly discussed as to origin and planning areas. Finally, each proposed regional planning area was presented for public comment when the State Plan was posted for same.

OWD has defined its policies and procedures regarding the subsequent designation process under Issuance 01-2024. Local areas must submit for subsequent designation following the process described therein. A brief summary is provided below:

Subsequent Designation Procedures

1. Requestor must submit an initial statement of Intent to Request Designation or other changes directly to the Director of the Office of Workforce Development via email to owd.director@dhewd.mo.gov. The request must include statement that the majority CLEO's of the impacted LWDAs are in agreement. Initial requests must be made prior to the new program year. A program year runs July 1 through June 30. Requests can be made at any time but are not guaranteed to be approved by the next program year. Such requests will be accepted at the discretion of the OWD Director. OWD will assist with the request as stated above. OWD will work with the requesting area to determine all deadlines for the full request.
2. Meetings between all parties must take place. OWD will provide support as needed. Steps must include:
 - a. A majority CLEO caucus vote in support of the designation for all impacted counties.
 - b. Opportunity for board member feedback and public comment period.
3. Requestor must submit a completed Local Area Designation Application (Attachment I) and any comments received by the prescribed deadline. Completed application must be submitted to OWD via email to owd.director@dhewd.mo.gov.
4. Upon receipt, OWD will review the request to determine if the application addresses all requirements.
5. OWD will forward the full application to the SWDB for review and determination.
 - a. OWD will publish a public notice regarding the designation request as an agenda item for the next scheduled SWDB meeting.
 - b. The SWDB meeting will be open to the public and comments about each request will be allowed and heard.
 - c. The SWDB will vote to recommend the designation of the local area to the Governor.

6. Upon receipt of final recommendations from SWDB, and following consideration of any additional comments, the Governor will:
 - a. Approve or deny each request; and
 - b. Provide written notification of the decision made regarding the request to:
 - i. SWDB;
 - ii. All other previously designated local WDBs and CLEOs; and
 - iii. Any non-designated entities requesting designation.

A public notice of the Governor's determinations will be posted in jobs.mo.gov.

7. Changes to existing local area designations will be forwarded to DOL/ETA in the form of a state plan or state plan modification.

Given that each former WIA region's designation request came from elected officials, and each met these criteria, they were approved as originally designated for WIOA in the same regional structure as WIA. However, in 2022, the Northwest and Northeast regions requested a merger into one local region, which went into effect July 2023. This process was initiated at the local level by the Chief Elected Officials for both regions and an astringent procedure was followed to complete the merger. This included guidance for the regions by OWD, guidance and approval for the merger by the State Workforce Development Board, and ultimate approval by the Governor.

C. Provide the appeals process and policy referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas

The appeals process is outlined OWD issuance 01-2024: Subsequent Designation of Local Workforce Development Area.

Local Area Designation Appeals Process

1. Procedures for appealing a denial of a subsequent designation of an LWDA are as follows:

Step I: A formal appeal request is prepared, posted for appropriate public comment, and signed by the CLEO(s) representing the appealing parties;

Step II: The appeal is placed in writing and submitted to the Governor;

Step III: Within 60 days of receipt of the appeal, the Governor will vet the appeal and advise the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB)

Step IV: SWDB will convene within the same 60-day period to either approve the appeal or to advise the Governor on any need for new information;

Step V: If SWDB and the Governor agree additional information is necessary, the appeals process will begin again under a second 60-day period, or until a final decision is determined by the Governor.

2. Details of the Appeal Documentation:

- The appeal shall be officially and formally developed and stated in writing in a letter addressed to the Governor of the State of Missouri.
- To be considered an official request, the letter shall fully contain and evidence the following elements:
 1. Introduction stated as a request;
 2. Use full citations from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;
 3. State the original designation, what units of government are involved, and which units of government are to be enclosed within the proposed local area upon appeal;
 4. Include a brief explanation of the influence and consideration to the request from an analysis of the labor market data and its impact upon designation, if any;
 5. Include an attachment(s) that is evidence that a public notice of the proposed designation in its entirety was developed and properly posted *before* the letter was written;
 6. Any public comments that are in opposition to the designation must be attached to the letter;
 7. Such a letter must be signed by the Presiding Commissioner of each County involved in the appeal and must verify that a consensus among all other County Commissioners is thereby represented.

The appeal is made final after the SWDB considers its findings and subsequent to announcement through an open meeting.

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LWDBs and/or unit(s) of local government may appeal the SWDB's non-designation by making an appeal to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor.⁵ Appeals must be filed no later than 30 days after receipt of the written notification of the denial from the SWDB, and submitted according to the details and requirements outlined in 20 CFR 683.640(b)-(c). As a result, the Secretary may require that that the area be designated as a local area. A written decision of the final determination will be issued to the Governor and the appellant.D. Provide the appeals process and policy referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding

The State of Missouri created a cost sharing committee, which included all of the partners' financial staff. This committee developed guidance to State and local partners for negotiating cost sharing agreements to comply with the WIOA requirements. The State of Missouri also includes in their guidelines an appeals process for infrastructure costs as outlined in 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA.

The State of Missouri appeals process for the state funding mechanism follows the final rules as published by the Departments at sections 678.730, 678.731, and 678.735-738, modified by the pending guidance for the final rules as promised by the Departments in the preamble for Part 678, Subpart E.

If OWD has to impose a State infrastructure cost-allocation mechanism, and upon receipt of the specific terms in it, any Local WDB or One-Stop required Partner may appeal, individually and for cause, the specific allocation imposed upon it within 21 calendar days. The appeal must be in writing (electronic or hardcopy) and make specific reference to that portion of cash, non-cash, or third party in-kind contributions which the mechanism requires that Local WDB or Partner to provide. To be officially received, an appeal must fully contain and evidence the following:

- Addressed to the attention of the Director of the Office of Workforce Development.
- An introduction identifying the appellant (identify the name of the LWDA and the name of the Local WDB, and the name of the appellant if it is a required Partner). The letter must clearly declare that it is a formal appeal.
- Full citations from WIOA or the WIOA Final Rules in Title 29 (or Title 34) of the Code of Federal Regulations that supports the appeal.
- Identify the basis for the appeal. WIOA stipulates that a determination to apply a State funding mechanism may be appealed only if the determination is inconsistent with the requirements of WIOA sec. 121(h)(2)(E). The Final Rule at 20 CFR 678.750

further limits admissible grounds for an appeal to three possibilities. The petitioner must make a case that the State's determination was not consistent with:

- the proportionate-share requirements in 20 CFR 678.737, or
 - the cost-contribution limitations in 20 CFR 678.730(c), or
 - the cost-contribution caps in 20 CFR 678.738.
- The letter must be signed (electronic signature is acceptable) and dated.

The State will acknowledge the appeal and return a determination from OWD under the designated authority of the Governor as quickly as feasible. Until the appeals process is completed, the appellant will remain liable for its contribution as originally determined in the State funding mechanism. If the appeal to the State using the process described in 20 CFR 678.750 is successful, it will result in a change to the appellant's infrastructure-cost contributions. Consequently, the Local WDB must update the Memorandum of Understanding, annotate it accordingly to reflect the final version of One-Stop Partner infrastructure-cost contributions, and distribute the updated version to all signatories.

2. Statewide Activities

A. Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities

A. Statewide workforce activities include the coordination and alignment of data systems, regional planning and service delivery, industry or sector partnerships, the development and training of staff along with technical assistance, fiscal operations and management accountability, monitoring and oversight, dissemination of information pertaining to and management of the state's Eligible Training Provider System, and evaluation of these various activities. OWD's process and guidance for requesting funds is as follows:

1. The process for review of Request for Funding (RFF) shall be no more than 60 days.
2. Requested documentation is submitted to OWD Senior Management, and then directed to a special committee assigned by the OWD Director.
3. Review and scoring will be completed no more than 30 days after receipt of submission for the RFF. If a score of less than 70 is achieved, the submitting entity shall be made aware of the denial and will be provided details of the scoring.
4. If a score of 70 or higher is achieved, financial and monitoring units will conduct a Risk Assessment and develop a Scope of Work (SOW). At which point, additional

engagement with the submitting entity may be required to obtain information or documentation to complete the contract packet and required updates to the state and/or federal systems.

5. Upon completion of the SOW, financial and monitoring staff will complete the contracting process.
6. Final approval by the OWD Director will be obtained and the submitting entity will be given authorization to implement the proposed project.

B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding for mandatory and discretionary activities, including how the State will conduct evaluations of Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth activities.

B. Missouri adheres to 20 CFR 682.200 and 20 CFR 682.212 in funding required and allowable statewide employment and training activities.

The State utilizes set aside funding to support innovative projects across Missouri. These include apprenticeships, specialized training programs, and programs designed specifically to serve low income and individuals with barriers, such as incarcerated individuals and persons with disabilities. The Rapid Response allocation is also used to fund local area dislocated worker projects that focus on declining industries.

OWD also uses discretionary funds to conduct evaluations through surveys across all programs in a variety of methods. A team of individuals representing state and local WIOA partners guides the evaluation process. The team participated in the 2022 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC) and learned about building an evidence-based framework to build projects. The team created a list of research questions focused on how customers could be served most effectively and could be answered through the data. The first formal project began in summer 2023 and will proceed forward accordingly.

The Missouri Evaluation Team meets regularly to review the data, advance the discussion of evaluation, and prioritize data projects that will benefit the workforce system.

Missouri was selected to participate in the 2022 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC). Representatives from all parts of Missouri's public workforce system learned about the WIOA evaluation process by building an evidence-based framework to be replicated and used to build research projects.

The Missouri team compiled a list of questions about the public workforce system to be answered through the data. The team prioritized the list of research topics and formed a project plan for Missouri's first formal evaluation project scheduled for completion in the first half of calendar year 2024. Research, analysis, and writing will take place in-house

with OWD taking the lead on evaluation activities. OWD staff salaries for those dedicating time to the project will be from the Governor's set-aside funds. The project plan for Missouri's first formal evaluation focuses on barriers, the types of services provided to individuals with barriers, and how outcomes may be affected based on the services.

Missouri's evaluation team will continue meeting regularly for updates and discussion on the topic of evaluation and research projects to inform the public workforce system. Team members include staff from data teams and Equal Opportunity in OWD, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Literacy, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Department of Social Services, and LWDBs representing both urban and rural areas of Missouri.

Missouri is striving to improve the workforce system and how citizens are served, and research and evaluation is part of the continuous improvement process. Missouri will continue strategically choosing projects to help better understand the population, unique needs based on geographic region, barriers, demographics, etc., and how services are designed and delivered to different populations. Projects will provide meaningful feedback and an objective assessment of the system and services available, allowing Missouri to validate, rethink, and pivot where needed.

C. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers.

C. The state uses WIOA rapid response funds to support a state Rapid Response unit. 20 CFR 682.330 guides activities of the Rapid Response unit to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing, comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for, and responding to layoffs and preventing or minimizing their impact on workers, businesses, and communities. The State issued a Statewide Employment Transition Team Policy (OWD Policy 02-2025, updated July 11, 2025) to be utilized across all Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA). This policy provides a consistent standard for ETT coordination in the LWDA's.

WIOA requires each state to carry out statewide Rapid Response activities or designate an entity to do so on its behalf. OWD has opted to operate the Rapid Response program at the state level in coordination with local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). OWD's Rapid Response Team, located regionally, take the lead role in responding to layoff events, and are responsible for coordinating, providing, and overseeing Rapid Response services in their assigned areas. While Rapid Response is required for mass layoffs and closures, it is the intent of WIOA for services to be provided to as many workers as possible. The Rapid

Response Team provides onsite or in-person services to any layoff affecting 25 or more. Layoffs affecting 24 or less may be offered onsite as needed or requested by the employer. At a minimum, smaller layoffs will be provided informational packets that include the Rapid Response programs and services brochure, the Division of Employment Security (DES) UI Benefits fact sheet, the Missouri Economic Research Information Center (MERIC) regional Real Time Labor Market Summary, and any local brochure, as requested by the LWDB. Every Rapid Response event is unique; therefore, each event shall be assessed individually, and services provided shall be determined based on the wishes of the employer, the needs of the affected workers, and the timeframe of the layoff.

Rapid Response meetings should include a representative from DES to present Unemployment Insurance information, a Missouri Job Center (MJC) representative to present programs and services information, and the appropriate union representative (if applicable). In addition, a representative from the USDOL Employee Benefits Administration shall be included when appropriate. If a MJC representative is unavailable or a LWDB chooses not to participate, the Rapid Response Team shall be responsible for presenting MJC information.

The Rapid Response Team is also utilized to meet with employers to provide guidance for layoff aversion. This includes collaboration with other partners such as the Department of Economic Development and local workforce boards who can assist with incumbent worker funding. Rapid Response can be a focal point of contact to employers to share resources and programs designed to address layoff aversion.

D. Describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

D. The state pursues opportunities for assistance through Natural Disaster Emergency Grants. The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) consults and coordinates with State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), the local workforce boards and local elected officials in designing these grants and for implementation.

Missouri operates a temporary employment program called Disaster Recovery Jobs Program (DRJP) to be utilized when a major disaster is declared by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and a Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) is awarded. The purpose of the DRJP is to restore public infrastructure and services so business and employment activities can resume through temporary employment of unemployed persons.

OWD is required to coordinate with FEMA when there is a dislocation event that is the result of a natural disaster to avoid any duplication of services or effort. Local offices invite

FEMA representatives to early intervention meetings discussing the potential worksites. DRJP work will not overlap FEMA cleanup efforts. The best practice is to allow FEMA to complete all work prior to DRJP employment cleanup begins.

Following state policies regarding rapid response activities (Policy 02-2025), the Rapid Response Team provides on-site or in-person services to any layoff affecting 25 or more individuals. Layoffs affecting 24 or less may be offered on-site services as needed or requested by the employer. Rapid Response activities in Missouri provide emergency assistance that is adapted to a particular layoff or disaster event. Additional assistance will be provided to Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) that experience disasters or dislocation events that exceed the capacity of the LWDA's resources.

E. Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) and ensures the provision of appropriate career services to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A) and TAA Section 221(a)(2)(A) .) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition and how the state will ensure the provision of appropriate career service to workers in the groups identified in the petition (TAA Sec. 221(a)(2)(A)).NOTE: until the TAA PROGRAM is reauthorized, the requirements to provide rapid response and appropriate career services to worker groups on whose behalf a petition has been filed is not applicable.

E. During any Rapid Response event, the Rapid Response Team provides to the workers an orientation of job centers services, which includes orientation and detailed information about the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Referrals are then made to TAA staff for any interested participants. TAA staff then ensure that eligible workers are provided access to services through the program, including training, case management and other services for these participants.

When a Trade Adjustment Assistance petition (TAA) is filed, the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) TAA Coordinator notifies the appropriate local Trade Act Navigator, appropriate CDT Specialist(s), CDT Manager, OWD Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Coordinator, the Division of Employment Security (DES) Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) Coordinator, and OWD Central Office TAA staff.

In most cases, the region's CDT Specialist(s), in coordination with the region's Trade Act Navigator, schedules a Rapid Response meeting. They invite a DES representative to provide information on Unemployment Insurance (UI). The Trade Act Navigator will notify the workers that a TAA petition has been filed without promising a certification. The Trade Act Navigator will refer the workers to the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL's) website and Missouri's TAA webpage, <https://jobs.mo.gov/trade-adjustment-assistance>, for petition status updates and additional information about TAA benefits and services. The Trade Act Navigator and the CDT specialist provide the worker with informational handouts on a variety of Job Center services and supportive service information, including TAA.

In Missouri, OWD Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) staff provide TAA information, <https://jobs.mo.gov/sites/jobs/files/taa-howto.pdf>, to individuals eligible for Unemployment Insurance (UI). This TAA information is also available in the Missouri Job Centers. The DES also post the TAA information on their website.

When TAA funds are not available, the state will use funds that have been reserved for rapid response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition to: 1) print and distribute Trade Act informational pamphlets; and 2) for Trade Navigators wages, fringe benefits and travel expenses for outreach so they may attend the rapid response meeting and provide information relating to TAA benefits and services including criteria and timeframes.

b. Adult and Dislocated Workers Program Requirements

1. Work-Based Training Models

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

(1) Work-based learning (WBL) aligns traditional classroom learning and technical workplace learning. The alignment of employer needs and education allows participants to increase their employability skills as well as their experience in the academic setting and real-world work environment. All work-based learning programs enhance the support and learning of participants through mentorship. Workforce services engage specific target populations to build talent pipelines that meet employer demand and collaborate with partner agencies, education providers and local workforce development regions to align training options with work-based learning activities.

- The state implements WBL through registered apprenticeships, registered youth apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeship programs, work experience internships, transitional jobs, on-the-job training (OJT), customized training and incumbent worker training. The Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning, housed at OWD, influences the expansion and standardization of Work-Based Learning models. Missouri has adopted a Work-Based Learning Framework to assist in promoting common language adoption among all who serve citizens at the point of entry into education and training.
- The continuum illustrates a non-linear path from career awareness to exploration to preparation, with a myriad of activity options. The various work-based learning activities do not fall into hard and fast, siloed buckets, and just like with any continuum, some of the activities straddle more than one category. Not all of the activities along the continuum fit the definition of work-based learning on their own, but they are all critical components that support the overarching goals.

Missouri Job Centers provide access to training services that are aligned with regional sector strategies. These services include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, transitional jobs training, job readiness training provided in combination with other training, registered apprenticeship, Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) activities, and customized training.

Work-based training is one of the highest priorities for Missouri under WIOA. The underlying advantage of work-based learning is that it incorporates skill competencies needed by employers. There is no doubt the trainees are learning the specific skills needed, and how to apply skills in the way the employer prefers. This ensures individuals completing training are positioned to immediately add value in the workplace and have marketable skills to provide upward mobility in a career pathway.

The partnerships developed through work-based training models ensure that the workforce system is offering high-quality customer service to employers, workers and jobseekers.

On the Job Training (OJT) is an ideal way for employers to train employees the way they want while giving participants the hands-on training they need to excel and learn the duties of the job. Job center staff initiate conversation with employers about the program and the benefits. If employers indicate that employer retention and training are needed, OJT is offered as an option to help offset training costs and to help employers find more loyal employees.

- Initial support for OJT participants consists of help with job placement and supportive services as needed.
- With monthly monitoring and support from the Job Center the participants continue to stay on track and receive feedback on their progress.
- Continued communication about the participant and status of training is one benefit of OJT training for participants and employers.
- OJT is a great way to encourage employees to get into a new career field and have continuous supervision as they progress through the given tasks.
- OJT benefits employers and employees because it is customized for each participant for each job.
- A detailed job description is created with clear goals and tasks, keeping both the employer and employee on track to a successful outcome.
- Successful outcomes are the goals for Missouri Job Centers as well as Missouri employers. OJT is a win-win for all Missourians.
- The OJT flyer can be viewed at: On-the-Job Training Employer Flyer | JobsMoGov

The Show-Me Heroes program assists veterans and spouses who have exited the military or returned from deployment to obtain employment.

Show-Me Heroes is a program for veterans, active Guard and Reserve (AGR), National Guard and Reserve members and their spouses, as well as spouses of active duty military members. The program includes reimbursement of 50% of the wages of workers hired under an on-the-job training (OJT) agreement. Additional services include financial assistance with classroom and apprenticeship training and supportive services including transportation and childcare. Job Center representatives connect workers with a proven work ethic to a specific employer and provide ongoing guidance and support.

- The Show-Me Heroes program flyer can be found at:
<https://jobs.mo.gov/media/pdf/show-me-heroes-flyer>
- The Job Center representatives that specifically work with and for veterans are in constant contact with local businesses and Chambers of Commerce, and this allows them to act as champions for veterans who may need employment assistance or other services that the Job Center can provide.

- When establishing OJT agreements, Job Center representatives work closely with employers to find out the needs of the business, and then work with them to develop training standards that ensure.

The Show-Me Heroes program participant gets quality training that meets the business's needs. The Job Center representatives stay in contact with both the employer and the OJT participant to ensure both are staying within program guidelines and whether further assistance is needed. Doing so keeps the local Job Center connected to their community, the area employers, and their veteran population.

The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program is designed to offset the costs of training or "skilling up" employees who have an established work history with their company. The program is designed specifically to provide training that would increase the competitiveness of an organization and prevent the threat of layoffs in the absence of skilled training.

- The IWT program encourages the advancement of a company's employees through certifications and skill attainment laying the groundwork for promotional opportunities.
- Advancement of incumbent workers also increases the opportunities for the hiring of entry level positions to fill the gaps left by these workers.
- Employers who utilize the program are required to give a wage increase upon completion which helps reduce turnover by providing the employee a reward for company loyalty.
- The program is administered by the local Workforce Development Board of each region in coordination with the state's WBL Coordinator to allow for flexibility in promoting the program and increasing local economic development opportunities.

The Incumbent Worker training policy allows local Boards the flexibility to provide this valuable service to employers when needed.

Transitional jobs are reserved for those chronically unemployed and provide real life work experience when it is greatly needed to be successful in the workplace. This service is provided as needed to meet the specific needs of the employer and participant.

2. Registered Apprenticeship

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., outreach to sponsors and prospective sponsors, identifying potential participants and connecting them to apprenticeship opportunities).

(2) Registered apprenticeship is an employer-driven training model with many benefits for employers and workers. It is a flexible workforce strategy that can be customized to meet the needs of any business. Apprentices can be new hires or current employees needing skill upgrades. The apprenticeship model is leading the way in preparing workers to compete in today's economy. Direct employer involvement in the educational process leads to apprenticeship programs with advancing technologies, innovations in training and talent management.

Through Apprenticeship Missouri, the state serves as a facilitator of registered apprenticeship expansion by connecting partners, employers, intermediaries and potential apprentices to a diverse mix of industry, non-profits, and education providers. In Missouri, federal, state, and local partners have united in the efforts to expand Registered Apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship Missouri serves as the lead influencer of apprenticeship expansion in Missouri. Through Apprenticeship Missouri, the state builds strategic relationships, increases credential attainment, and expands apprenticeship alignment with career pathways and postsecondary education. The state continues to retain dedicated apprenticeship staffing for recruitment of apprentices, business and activity delivery. It also targets sectors that open career pathways and training access points for Missourians. Of particular note is the growth of state-agency registered apprenticeships, including a Direct Care Support Professional with the Department of Mental Health, Maintenance Technician through the Department of Transportation, and various occupations with the Missouri National Guard. In 2023, OWD implemented an internal apprenticeship program for front line staff. This unique approach to the "earn while you learn" model within OWD has reduced turnover, enhanced skill development, and allows staff to gain a credential for their career pathway within workforce development. The true value of the investment in registered apprenticeship projects is the long-term result of creating a competitive workforce for Missouri's future.

OWD utilizes a partnering consortium known as the Missouri Apprenticeship Team (MAT) to engage sponsors, prospective sponsors, employers, local and state Chambers of Commerce, United States Department of Apprenticeship staff, and state partners including the WIOA Core agencies, and community-based programs. This consortium meets every other month and provides integral updates, networking and potential apprenticeship opportunities to the participants.

Through a partnership with the Missouri Chamber of Commerce, OWD supports a website called Apprenticeship Connect. This site links potential participants, sponsors, training entities and employers to apprenticeship opportunities.

The Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) guidance requires registered apprenticeship training programs be contained in the state's system.**3. Training Provider Eligibility Procedure**

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

(3) Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

In order for a training provider to be considered eligible for Registered Apprenticeships, they must meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) Institution of higher education that provide programs that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential, or
- (2) Other public or private providers that provide training that may include Community Based Organizations (COBs) and Joint Labor-Management Organizations. This could include eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II, if such activities are provided in combination with individual training services.

For either of these eligibility criteria, providers must be certified by the appropriate governing body, and have an up-to-date website to include program descriptions, tuition, fees, and supplies. An applicant must have available upon request a copy of its license to operate, the authorizing body making this determination, and the date of expiration. Any expired license will need to be updated before eligibility determination can continue. Applicants should submit programs leading to recognized postsecondary credentials or certifications of occupations which are in demand. They also must demonstrate the ability to provide training services to individuals who are employed and to individuals with barriers to employment.

(3) Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs).

Registered Apprenticeship Eligibility Criteria

An entity that carries out programs registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the "National Apprenticeship Act"; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) also qualifies for eligibility.

For Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) sponsors that would like to be included on the state ETPS the following information will need to be added as an ETP:

- Occupations included within the registered apprenticeship program

- Name and address of the RAP program sponsor
- Names and addresses of the Related Technical Instruction provider(s) and the location(s) of instruction if different from the program sponsor's address
- Method and length of instruction
- Number of active apprentices

RAPs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements, or to a period of initial eligibility, or initial eligibility procedures as other providers, due to the detailed application and vetting procedures required to be a Registered Apprenticeship program sponsor with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). However, a RAP sponsor may voluntarily report performance outcomes.

RAPs that are on the ETPS list will remain on the list until one of the following:

- RAP been deregistered by a finding of the U.S. Department of Labor.
- RAP sponsor notifies the state that it no longer wants the program to be included on the list.
- RAP sponsor intentionally provided inaccurate information.
- RAP sponsor violated any provision of Title 1 of WIOA or the WIOA regulation including 29 CFR Part 38 for no less than two years.
- RAP certification expires without renewal by the provider.

Process for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility. ETP Application Review Process, addressed above.

Step 1. Review Provider to determine if the provider is a current, past or new provider to ETPS. If a new provider, the provider must meet the minimum criteria to apply (the criteria is provided on the ETPS webpage <https://jobs.mo.gov/community/missouri-eligible-training-provider-system>)

If the provider meets criteria, we move to step 2, if not the provider and its programs are either placed in a non-WIOA approval status or a rejected status depending on what criteria is not met (example, provider has not been offering programs for a minimum of 12 months) until such time all criteria is met, and they are welcome to resubmit their programs.

Step 2. Verify the certification of the program by the applicable governing body which provides oversight for the provider. Examples of governing bodies and examples of respective program types are listed below.

- Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD)
 - Credit Programs
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
 - Career Centers such as Eldon Technical Center
- Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS)
 - For programs such as EMT or CNA/CMT programs, LPN or RN
- Department of Public Safety (DPS)
 - To find partners for law enforcement programs
- Professional Registration
 - For programs such as cosmetology or barber programs
- Secretary of State of Missouri
- Non-Missouri WIOA website for out of state institutions (America's Service Locator)
 - The program will be verified on the reciprocal state's website
 - WIOA-Eligible Training Program Finder
<https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/EmploymentAndTraining/find-WIOA-training-programs.aspx>
- Certification of credit programs is verified through College and Degree Search
 - <https://web.dhewd.mo.gov/collegedegreesearch/>
 - Program information verified through College and Degree Search should match program information supplied in the MoJobs program application
 - College and degree search lists programs for the following school types
 - Public 4 year
 - Public 2 year
 - Independent 4 year
 - Independent 2 year
 - Professional and Technical
 - Theological
 - Proprietary Schools
 - Out-of-State Public Schools
- Certification of non-credit programs

- Certification or exemption for the program by MDHEWD's Office of Postsecondary Policy may be required prior to the program's inclusion on the ETPL
- Providers must be certified or exempt to provide training in Missouri per state statute; out of state online providers must be approved or exempted to recruit
 - Referral to MDHEWD's Office of Postsecondary Policy may be required to begin the process of certification or exemption

Step 3. Verify that the program offers a recognized post-secondary credential upon successful completion.

Step 4. Review curriculum associated with the program to identify industry related skills gained through the program.

Step 5. Compare O*Net occupation codes required skills to skills gained

- [O*NET OnLine](#)

Step 6. Research MO job openings to see if skills gained meet qualifications for an entry level job or advancement

Step 7. Obtain letters from 2 or more employers attesting that Industry Recognized Credential (IRC) qualifies the student for employment, if applicable.

Step 8. Save supporting documents in the electronic provider record. Documents may include:

- The governing body documentation for each program.
- For an out-of-state institution, the approved list with the out of state program on the reciprocal state's ETPL.
- For non-credit programs not listed on governing body websites, institution's website for each program
- Institution's program cost
- US Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship certificate and/or Appendix A for Registered Apprenticeships

Step 9. Approve or reject the program for ETPL inclusion

- If rejecting a program, notify the provider via email with the reason for the rejection.
 - Upload a copy of this email to the electronic record

Although the ETPS keeps a history of provider/program activities, the ETPS Coordinator also keeps paper files with the following included: copy of approval email, copy of program list from designated agency and any notes to keep for future reference.

Training providers must meet the requirements for eligibility and provide accurate information to retain its status as an eligible training provider. Only the state may take steps to request removal of an eligible training provider and/or programs from the ETPL in consultation with the ETPL Coordinator. The state can remove a program, an eligible training provider, or both when it:

- Intentionally submits inaccurate data and there is evidence

- Has substantially violated any provision of Title 1 of WIOA and its regulations, including 29 CFR Part 38
- Is in violation of state and/or local laws; and/or
- Has ceased to be in business and/or lost its license to operate
- Fails to meet performance levels

As a part of the biennial review of eligibility, when the consumer report process and subsequent eligibility is complete, eligible training providers and/or programs may be subject to the removal procedure due to not meeting criteria or failure to meet established minimum performance levels.

In any case of substantial violation, the State will consider whether the substantial violation was caused by an event outside of the control of the training provider such as natural disasters, unexpected personnel transitions, and unexpected technology-related issues. If the substantial violation is determined to be caused by events outside of the control of the training provider, the State will allow up between to six (6) months to achieve compliance, as is appropriate for the situation.

All approved programs (WIOA & Non-WIOA) are pulled into MoSCORES and DHEWD's FastTrack program nightly. The WIOA approved programs are pushed into MoJobs, which has a one-day lag time (ex. program approved on Monday will not show on MoJobs until Wednesday). Eligible Training Provider requirements, registration information, and other resources are online at: <https://jobs.mo.gov/community/missouri-eligible-training-provider-list>.

4. Describe how the State will implement and monitor for the Adult Priority of Service requirement in WIOA section 134 (c)(3)(E) that requires American Job Center staff, when using WIOA Adult program funds to provide individualized career services and training services, to give priority of service to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient (including English language learners).

(4) The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) requires that each local Workforce Development Board (WDB) establish a tiered, local, priority-of-service policy which must assign top priority to public-assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic-skills deficient, including English language learners. The policy must also allow other eligible individuals outside of the top-priority group to have access to these services. Local WDBs must have written policies that explain how they will give priority of service and adhere to these policies. OWD will ensure compliance through

monitoring of data for each region in the state case management system and will provide technical assistance to regions that fail to meet their established policy.

OWD's Policy Issuance 01-2023: Statewide enrollment and exit policy states "The WIOA regulations require states and Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) to establish priority of service criteria for Adult program-funded Individualized Career Services and Training Services. The State's policy is that Local WDBs must establish tiered, local, priority-of-service policies. These policies must assign top priority to:

- Public-assistance recipients;
- Low-income individuals, and
- Individuals who are basic-skills deficient (including English language learners).

These policies must also allow other eligible individuals outside of the top-priority group to have access to these services. DOL's recommendation⁵ is to give priority of service to these individuals ensuring that at least 75% of a state's participants receiving individualized career and training services, in the Adult program, are from at least one of the priority groups mentioned above. The priority of service rate must never be lower than 50.1%.

5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs

(5) The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) established OWD Issuance 14-2018, Transfer Amount Allowable between Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult Program and Dislocated Worker Program Funding Streams Policy, to address the transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs. Effective July 1, 2015, the maximum amount of adult program and dislocated worker program funds that can be transferred per annual allocation including both the Program Year (PY) and Fiscal Year (FY) allocations is 100%. The policy details the requirements for notifying OWB of the transfers and submitting local plan modifications.

All transfer requests must be submitted through the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development's Financial Reporting System (FRS). When the total exceeds 20% the transfer request must be submitted through the local plan modification process. Transfers from administrative funds to program funds within the same program's funding stream (i.e., adult FY administrative funds to adult FY program funds) do not require a plan modification.

Before submitting a transfer request, the local WDB is required to analyze the changing economic conditions in their area in order to identify the need for a transfer request. If there is a need to transfer more than the 20% of the original allocated or re-allotted formula allocation, the local WDB must submit a local plan modification to OWD that includes the following information:

- The percent and dollar amount of the LWDA's Adult or Dislocated Worker formula funds to be transferred; and
- The justification for the transfer must be explained in the request, described in the local plan modification, and must, at a minimum, include the following information:
 1. General purpose or reason for the transfer between adult and dislocated worker programs;
 2. An explanation of the need for the transfer;
 3. Information on how the transfer will affect the program from which the funds are being transferred; and
 4. A narrative explanation of how the transferred funds will be used. Local WDBs are still expected to continue operating adult and dislocated worker programs and to meet their agreed upon performance numbers, regardless of the funding transfer.

Transfer requests are reviewed by the OWD program managers overseeing the adult and dislocated worker programs. Requests are approved if all the above criteria is met.

6. Describe the State's policy on WIOA and TAA co-enrollment and whether and how often this policy is disseminated to the local workforce development boards and required one-stop partners. Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(a)(3)(i).

(6) The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) Policy 01-2023: Statewide Enrollment and Exit Policy requires co-enrollment between the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Dislocated Worker program and the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. In general terms, it describes basic requirements for TAA participants and the requirement for co-enrollment. Further it provides some of the benefits of co-enrollment between the WIOA Dislocated Worker and TAA programs including wrap around services such as supportive services that TAA does not provide. All issuances, including this one, are posted on the OWD Main internet site that is viewable by OWD, partner staff, and the public. It is reviewed at least annually for any needed revisions.

The OWD TAA Unit also has a Co-Enrollment section in their manual that is also posted on OWD Main and in the case management system. It describes the co-enrollment

requirements as outlined in the TAA Final Rule and includes a hyperlink to the Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 4-20, which describes integrating services for trade-affected workers under the TAA program with the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. The manual section provides step by step directions for using the TAA Participant Referral to WIOA Dislocated Worker Enrollment form. The form describes the benefits and services under the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program and then allows the trade-affected worker to choose to be referred to WIOA for additional services or decline WIOA Dislocated Worker Program services. OWD has a referral module within the case management system that allows trade-affected workers to be electronically referred. The Trade Act Navigator(s) contacts the appropriate WIOA staff to inform them of the referral.

7. Describe the State's formal strategy to ensure that WIOA and TAA co-enrolled participants receive necessary funded benefits and services. Trade Act Sec. 239(f), Sec. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(c)

(7) The OWD Trade Act Navigator(s) is required to review WIOA benefits and services with the trade-affected worker. The worker is then provided a TAA Participant Referral to WIOA Dislocated Worker Enrollment form. The worker can request to be referred to WIOA or they can decline participation in the WIOA program. Also, if while the Trade Act Navigator is working with the trade-affected worker and discovers a need that TAA cannot provide but WIOA can, the worker is then formally referred to the WIOA program for appropriate benefits and services. This process ensures that the individual receives the necessary funded benefits and services.

8. Describe the State's process for familiarizing one-stop staff with the TAA program. 20 CFR 618.804(j), 20 CFR 618.305

(8) Information about the TAA program is available to the Missouri Job Centers staff through the TAA webpage and TAA manual posted on OWD Main and in the case management system. As new information becomes available about the TAA program, it is electronically distributed to all Missouri Job Center Supervisors and WIOA Directors. Additionally, presentations are made to all OWD staff and partners through a learning opportunity called Wise Up Wednesday. This is a platform that allows a variety of topics to be shared with staff and allows the opportunity for clarifications and questions. Presentations are also made to staff and partners as requested. In addition, the OWD TAA staff report to a Manager responsible for program oversight.

c. Youth Program Requirements.

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, States should describe their strategies that will support the implementation of youth activities under WIOA. State's must-

1. Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants or contracts for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA.¹¹ Further, include a description of how the State assists local areas in determining whether to contract for services or to provide some or all of the program elements directly.

¹¹ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

(1) OWD has an existing policy regarding awarding grants or contract for youth workforce investment activities (OWD Issuance 15-2019). LWDBs have the option to provide directly some or all youth services. If the LWDB chooses to award grants or contracts to a youth services provider to carry out some or all of the youth services, the LWDB must award such grants or contracts on a competitive basis.

Providers of training services under Title I of WIOA must meet the eligibility requirements of the law, be approved by State agencies and under the criteria as described in the State Plan and be approved by the LWDB to provide services in the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA).

The procurement must be a process that provides for full and open competition and avoids even the appearance of a conflict of interest (either individually or organizationally). Procurement actions must be conducted in a manner that provides for full and open competition and prevents the existence of conflicting roles that might bias judgment and cause unfair competitive advantage. Such actions must assure separation of those who develop or issue the solicitation, or are involved in the selection process, from those who bid upon it. Accordingly, an identifiable sub-unit of the local government or non-governmental organization may not submit a bid or an offer on a grant or contract solicitation if that sub-unit is involved in the development of the solicitation, the review, evaluation and selection process, or the ongoing post award administration (including oversight) of the award.

Supporting documentation of the history of each procurement action must be maintained. Such documentation must include a rationale for: the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price. Such documentation also includes evaluation criteria or rating factors to support the provider's ability to perform successfully, with consideration given to integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, in addition to financial and technical resources, that follow state and federal guidelines.

Contracts must be awarded based on the vendor's:

- Ability to deliver services to the targeted population in accordance with locally established guidelines;
- Experience in working with youth in similar programs and activities;
- Past and current collaboration with other service providers;
- Past performance record, including both programmatic and fiscal integrity;
- Understanding of and commitment to meeting goals and objectives; and
- Demonstration of understanding of and commitment to continuous improvement methods.

The following requirements can be found in OWD Issuance 15-2019:

If a LWDB chooses to award grants or contracts to youth service providers, to carry out youth workforce investment activities it must:

- Identify youth service providers based on criteria established in the State Plan;
- Take into consideration the ability of the provider to meet performance accountability measures;
- Award such grants or contracts on a competitive basis and in accordance with the Procurement Standards found in Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR parts 200 and 2900; and
- If the service provider (entity) selected fulfills another role in the local area, the LWDB must provide a signed written agreement with the LWDB and CEO which clarifies expectations for those roles and describes a clear method of tracking effective execution and accountability for the distinct roles.

Local regions must follow the sub-state monitoring guidelines for programmatic and financial monitoring of youth providers. They also must do data element validation to insure performance of youth providers.

OWD acts in consult with local regions when determining whether they should contract for services or provide some of all of the program elements directly. Key factors which are discussed with regions include their capacity to provide needed services to youth, and the establishment of firewall policies to define separation of duties. If a local region decides to take programs or services in-house, this must be done in consult with OWD, and regions must have approval from OWD before proceeding.

2. Explain how the State assists local workforce boards in achieving equitable results for out-of-school and in-school youth. Describe promising practices or partnership models that local areas are implementing and the state's role in supporting and scaling those models within the state for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

(2) Missouri assists local boards in the development of collaborative relationships with required and optional partners to achieve equitable results for out-of-school (OSY) and in-school youth (ISY). Effective partnerships improve outcomes for youth and ensure the 14 required program elements are accessible throughout the state's one stop delivery system.

Missouri supports the local boards to improve the number of both OSY and ISY engagements annually. This support includes engagement with partners that deliver effective models in serving youth throughout the state. Partnerships include Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), ACT, Youth Build, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and various other youth-oriented organizations.

By establishing these partnerships at the state level, it has opened the door for direct engagement at the local level. Missouri appropriates funding for WorkKeys testing and work with Career and Technical Education Centers to provide the assessments. The state has introduced JAG Specialists to local workforce board staff to provide direct linkages to the 14 WIOA Youth elements. Additionally, the state assists the local board with outreach to various youth-oriented organizations to provide awareness of one-stop services.

The Career Opportunity for Youth (COTY) is a pilot program to connect youth to Job Center services. The project connects students not pursuing education or training after high school with Job Center services, career exploration opportunities, and paid work experiences with local employers.

Missouri is committed to supporting the local boards in increasing the number of OSY and ISY served. This collaboration will increase youth employability skills, provide employers with a skilled workforce, and increase DOL Youth performance measures.

3. Describe how the State assists local workforce boards in implementing innovative models for delivering youth workforce investment activities, including effective ways local workforce boards can make available the 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2); and explain how local areas can ensure work experience, including quality pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship, is prioritized as a key element within a broader career pathways strategy.

(3) The state continues to contract with each of the state's 13 local WDBs to ensure that each youth program element described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) is administered in each

area of the state. The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) staff evaluates through each Local Workforce Development Plan whether the 14 program elements are available in the area and how they are offered.

OWD has dedicated staff who work directly with the local WDBs to make sure staff are knowledgeable of the regulations surrounding the WIOA youth program. OWD monitors the local WDBs and their subcontractors on an annual basis to ensure the elements are available and the methods for providing the elements are successful within the area. Technical assistance is provided statewide to guarantee understanding of each element and follow-up is available as needed.

The OWD provides resources for the LWDBs employer outreach activities, including establishing quality work experience sites in a variety of career pathways for each local area.

The OWD has a valued partnership with DOL's Office of Apprenticeship. Together the state will continue to establish pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships with a high focus on the youth population.

A case management task force has been created to work closely with the local areas and provide continuous technical assistance. OWD utilizes this group to provide training across the state on quality work experiences, with a focus on services which will benefit youth. This also supports the overall state plan strategy to place a high emphasis on outreach and provision of services to the youth population.

4. Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII). If the state does not have a policy, describe how the state will ensure that local areas will have a policy for these criteria.

(4) The state does not have policy for “requires additional assistance to complete and educational program, or to secure and hold employment.” This is locally defined by each workforce development board. It is then be submitted to and approved by the State.

d. Single-area State Requirements

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

1. Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)
2. The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)
3. A description of the type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities and successful models, including for youth with disabilities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

This does not apply to the State of Missouri.

4. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

This does not apply to the State of Missouri.

5. The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for title I activities.

This does not apply to the State of Missouri.

6. How training services outlined in section 134 will be provided through individual training accounts and/or through contracts, and how such training approaches will be coordinated. Describe how the State will meet informed customer choice requirements regardless of training approach.

This does not apply to the State of Missouri.

7. How the State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions, will coordinate title I activities with those activities under title II. Describe how the State Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.

This does not apply to the State of Missouri.

8. Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.

This does not apply to the State of Missouri.

e. Waiver Requests (optional)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;
2. Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;
3. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;
4. Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:
 - A. Supporting employer engagement;*
 - B. Connecting education and training strategies;*
 - C. Supporting work-based learning;*
 - D. Improving job and career results, and*
 - E. Other guidance issued by the department.*
5. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and
6. Describes the processes used to:
 - A. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;*
 - B. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;*
 - C. Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;*
 - D. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.*
 - E. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.*
7. The most recent data available regarding the results and outcomes observed through implementation of the existing waiver, in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

Waiver Request #1

1. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the State would like to waive:

WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410; Missouri is requesting to waive the requirement that states, and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's reserve and local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth based on school status. Missouri is

requesting that this percentage be lowered to 50 percent for both local and statewide funded activities for PY2026 & PY2027 funds.

2. Actions the State has undertaken to remove State or local barriers:

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. The state of Missouri regulations, policy guidance and issuances are in compliance with federal law.

3. A discussion of how the waiver complements Department of Labor priorities (i.e. expansion of apprenticeship, improved employer engagement, etc.);

The State of Missouri is a lead state in the nation for its apprenticeship programs. Missouri supports the registered apprenticeship program and continues to expand the program with statewide funds and other grants. The Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development has pledged to support opportunities for students and workers in high growth industries in the state including the healthcare, information technology, and advanced manufacturing sectors by engaging youth and providing opportunities in work-based learning, training, and other workforce services.

The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) continue to develop apprenticeship opportunities for youth and young adults ages sixteen and older. Both pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships allow high school juniors and seniors to simultaneously further education options and earn wages. Youth apprentices face a lower risk of dropping out of high school and are engaged in a transition to post-secondary education. The Missouri Research and Information Center (MERIC) has found that job openings that require education and skill level beyond high school are in high growth occupational fields and pay higher salaries.

In addition to its support of apprenticeship growth, the State of Missouri launched a program referred to as Career Opportunity Training Youth (COTY), aimed at helping high school students identify career pathways and required training to be successful in their chosen career. The program provides career planning and exploration assistance, work readiness training, access to paid work experiences, and supportive services. This program, originally piloted in the Central Workforce Development Region in partnership with the Local Workforce Development Board, has been very successful in serving in-school youth and would not have been possible without the current waiver in place.

With the approval of this waiver, the State of Missouri and Local Workforce Development Boards will have the flexibility to utilize federal funding to increase the number of youth and young adults enrolled in services, such as work experience and apprenticeship activities.

Local Boards and youth staff will also have the ability to provide the comprehensive services needed and personal contact required to ensure student success.

4. Quantifiable projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver;

The goals and outcomes for this waiver are:

- a. Increase in measurable skills gains for the In-School (IS) students based off PY2024 achieved measure of 64.90%: Year 1-1%; Year 2-2%; Year 3-3%; & Year 4-4%;
- b. Increase attainment of industry recognized credentials for high school youth based off PY2024 achieved measure of 60.80%: Year 1-1%; Year 2-1%; Year 3-1%; & Year 4-1%;

5. Individuals, groups or populations benefitting from the waiver or otherwise impacted by the waiver from the waiver:

This waiver request will provide OWD and Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) the flexibility to serve more youth and young adults in work-based learning and the apprenticeship model regardless of school status. It will facilitate the provision of the necessary funding and the ease of current regulations essential to designing programs that will aid youth and young adults in the preparation for long-term participation in the Missouri labor force. Economic growth in Missouri and its high-growth industries will be sustained with the infusion of skilled workers ready to fill current job openings and adequately trained for future openings.

Missouri will continue to train OSY through its WIOA funding. Local areas will not be required to utilize the waiver, however, will be required to submit a request to utilize the waiver locally, should it fall within the local area's local plan for serving both OSY and ISY.

Missouri students and eligible youth population, Missouri's employers and high-growth industries will benefit from this waiver.

6. How the State plans to monitor waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information:

Once it is approved, OWD will issue guidance to the local workforce development boards (LWDB) that outlines the process to request the use of the waiver, as well as the mandatory reporting process. The reporting at a minimum will require the WDBs monitor the waiver and the utilization and submit quarterly reports to the state regarding enrollments that impact the waiver; outcomes of the trainings received; and the impact it

has had on enrollments and WIOA metrics. The implementation and progress of the waiver utilization will be reviewed, at a minimum, quarterly by programmatic, compliance, and fiscal staff with technical assistance being providing as needed.

In addition to the quarterly reports submitted by the WDBs, OWD units will utilize the state's electronic case management system (MoJobs) to verify customer enrollments and outcomes. OWD's financial monitoring will utilize the Financial Reporting System (FRS) to monitor expenditures and lines items applicable to the waiver.

Most recent data regarding this waiver is provided.

In-School Youth Served					
	Program Year				
	PY 2020	PY 2021	PY 2022	PY 2023	PY 2024
Number Served	314	407	476	367	422

Previous data for measurable skill gains and credentials:

Measurable Skills Gain and Credentials Attainment Performance for 2024				
	Measurable Skill Gains	Measurable Skill Gains	Credential Attainment Performance	Credential Attainment Performance
	PY 2024 (All)	PY 2024 (ISY)	PY 2024 (All)	PY 2024 (ISY)
Goal*	53.00%		63.50%	
Achieved	65.42%	64.90%	65.24%	60.80%

Waiver Request #2

1. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the State would like to waive:

20 CFR 681.550: Missouri is requesting a waiver to allow local areas and the state to provide in-school youth, ages 16-21 with Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). This will allow Missouri to collaborate with education institutions to prepare students for employment through registered apprenticeship opportunities or through post-secondary education opportunities.

2. Actions the State has undertaken to remove State or local barriers:

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. The state of Missouri regulations, policy guidance and issuances are in compliance with federal law.

3. State strategic goal(s) and Department of Labor priorities (i.e. expansion of apprenticeship, improved employer engagement, etc.) supported by the waiver:

Missouri would like to waive this requirement in order to allow ITAs for out of school youth and expand the flexibility to in-school youth, ages 16-21. This will expand training options and allow these youth to explore and consider various post-secondary career pathway options, such as registered apprenticeship programs and college.

4. Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver:

The goals and outcomes for this waiver are to:

1. Increase in measurable skills gains for the In-School (IS) students based off PY2024 achieved measure of 64.90%: Year 1-65.40%; Year 2-65.90%; Year 3-66.40%; & Year 4-66.90%;
2. Increase obtainment of industry recognized credentials for high school youth based off PY2024 achieved measure of 65.24%: Year 1-66.24%; Year 2-67.24%; Year 3-68.24%; & Year 4-69.24%;

5. Individuals, groups or populations benefitting from the waiver:

This waiver will benefit the WIOA in-school youth population, ages 16-21, which includes disadvantaged youth and youth with multiple barriers to employment.

Missouri will continue to provide ITA for OSY through its WIOA funding. Local areas will not be required to utilize the waiver request, however, will be required to submit a request to utilize the waiver locally, should it fall within the local area's local plan for the delivery of training services for ISY. Through this waiver, the state will provide ITAs for ISY ages 18-24.

6. How the State plans to monitor waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information:

Once it is approved, OWD will issue guidance on the waiver which will include a mandatory reporting process for the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) that request and utilize the specific waiver. The reporting at a minimum will require the WDBs monitor the waiver and the utilization and submit quarterly reports to the state regarding enrollments that impact the waiver; outcomes of the trainings received; and the impact it has had on enrollments and WIOA metrics. The implementation and progress of the waiver utilization

will be reviewed at a minimum, quarterly by programmatic, compliance, and fiscal staff with technical assistance being provided if needed.

In addition to the quarterly reports submitted by the Workforce Development Boards, OWD units will utilize the state's electronic case management system (MoJobs) to verify customer enrollments and outcomes. OWD's financial monitoring will utilize the Financial Reporting System (FRS) to monitor expenditures and line items applicable to the waiver.

Waiver Request #3

1. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the State would like to waive:

WIOA 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b); Waiver to increase on-the-job training employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses.

2. Actions the State has undertaken to remove State or local barriers:

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. The state of Missouri regulations, policy guidance and issuances are in compliance with federal law.

3. State strategic goal(s) and Department of Labor priorities (i.e. expansion of apprenticeship, improved employer engagement, etc.) supported by the waiver:

The State of Missouri will utilize this waiver to offer businesses with work-based learning opportunities to re-establish their workforce and provide job seekers the opportunity to connect with the workforce and learn skills to establish self-sufficiency. This waiver is intended to improve employer engagement and allow for more businesses to be supported through WIOA funding.

4. Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver:

This waiver request will assist Missouri to further enhance its existing efforts designed to establish a talent pipeline that will address the labor market needs of local Missouri businesses.

PY 2024 data indicates a steady increase in the number of OJTs since PY 2022. In 2023, OWD hired an apprenticeship and work-based learning program coordinator; this staff member has been crucial in increasing awareness of OJT and waivers available and providing local workforce areas with program guidance, materials, and other technical assistance identified. Staffing support is expected to yield an increase in OJT enrollments. Meanwhile, staff continue to market OJT as WIOA programmatic support for

apprenticeship and will offer a valuable resource to local workforce development areas looking to expand business service offerings.

The goal is to increase the number of OJTs being utilized by 5% each year, using PY2024 data (36) as the baseline.

5. Individuals, groups or populations benefitting from the waiver:

This waiver request will provide Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) the flexibility to work with businesses in their community, following the targeted businesses outlined in local policy, and assist job seekers with barriers to employment and in need of additional training to secure employment.

Local areas have had difficulty using OJT at the rate allowed by law due to the decrease in local business outreach staff. The state has a statewide OJT policy in place which requires every local board to establish OJT policy that establishes factors used to determine when increasing the OJT wage reimbursement rates above 50% to 75%, as required under 20 CFR 680.730, which includes employers qualified as small businesses. In following WIOA regulations, the intent is not for the reimbursement to go only to large businesses. However, with staff turnover and being a large business, it is costly and time consuming to train individuals.

Additionally, the statewide policy mandates that every employer must undergo a pre-award review. The pre-award review assesses the employer's previous OJT history, among other requirements. Policy states: OJTs must not be entered into with employers that consistently fail to retain OJT participants.

The State Workforce Development Board and the Governor both have reviewed and approved Missouri's state plan.

6. How the State plans to monitor waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information:

Once it is approved, OWD will issue guidance on the waiver which will include a mandatory reporting process for the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) that request and utilize the specific waiver. The reporting at a minimum will require the WDBs monitor the waiver and the utilization and submit quarterly reports to the state regarding enrollments that impact the waiver; outcomes of the trainings received; and the impact it has had on enrollments and WIOA metrics. The implementation and progress of the waiver utilization will be reviewed at a minimum, quarterly by programmatic, compliance, and fiscal staff with technical assistance being providing if needed.

In addition to the quarterly reports submitted by the WDBs, OWD units will utilize the state's electronic case management system (MoJobs) to verify customer enrollments and outcomes. OWD's Regulatory Compliance team will monitor expenditures to ensure WDBs are following established written policies to allow for the use of the increase reimbursement rate.

Most recent data regarding current waiver request provided.

OJTs by Region, Per Program Year				
Region	PY 2021	PY 2022	PY 2023	PY 2024
Central	9	16	7	3
East Jackson County	2	0	1	1
Jefferson/Franklin Consortium	9	3	3	2
Kansas City & Vicinity	10	2	2	2
North Region	0	0	2	3
Ozark Region	3	1	5	9
South Central Region	9	0	4	2
Southeast Region	3	2	5	8
Southwest Region	4	0	0	2
St. Charles County	1	1	1	0
St. Louis County	5	1	1	1
West Central Region	3	3	2	3
TOTAL	64	29	33	36

Waiver Request #4

1. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the State would like to waive:

WIOA 134(d)(4) and 20 CFR 680.800(a)

Missouri requests to waive the ability of the local areas to reserve more than 20% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training for PY2026 and PY2027.

2. Actions the State has undertaken to remove State or local barriers:

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. The state of Missouri regulations, policy guidance and issuances are in compliance with federal law.

3. State strategic goal(s) and Department of Labor priorities (i.e. expansion of apprenticeship, improved employer engagement, etc.) supported by the waiver:

In an effort to assist employers with upskilling current employees to remain marketable and competitive, the State of Missouri is requesting this waiver to allow the local areas the flexibility to offer additional incumbent worker training opportunities within their service area. This waiver will assist local workforce development areas support in improving employer engagement efforts.

4. Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver:

The use of these strategies will increase skills for underemployed workers in an effort to advance these workers to more skilled positions with the same employer or industry sector leading to an increase in earnings through more work hours or an increase in pay.

During the last program year, two regions used Incumbent Worker Training. IWT training for last year (PY24) served a total of 55 participants throughout Missouri; however, collectively served more participants than PY2023. OWD's Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Team has implemented a series of monthly Office Hours aimed at equipping workforce staff with awareness of the available WIOA work-based learning services available, including information on IWT. Additionally, the unit is in the process of updating its WIOA guidance materials, making it easier to implement IWT statewide. The goal of this waiver will be to increase participants served by 5% each year and employers served by 5%. To support this growth, growing the use of IWT to additional Local Workforce Development Boards will be a focus of this waiver, as well.

5. Individuals, groups or populations benefitting from the waiver:

This waiver request will provide Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) the flexibility to work with businesses in their community to re-build their workforce and possibly alleviate business closures and lay-off. It will also provide an opportunity for incumbent workers to retain employment and upgrade skills.

Missouri would like to request a threshold of up to 50%. The 20 percent threshold limits local areas who are actively providing incumbent worker training services. By allowing an increase in this area, local areas can provide services to employers, increase skill levels of Missouri's workers, and overall lead to better economic growth and higher wages.

6. How the State plans to monitor waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information:

Once it is approved, OWD will issue guidance on the waiver which will include a mandatory reporting process for the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) that request and utilize the specific waiver. The reporting at a minimum will require the WDBs monitor the waiver and the utilization and submit quarterly reports to the state regarding enrollments that impact the waiver; outcomes of the trainings received; and the impact it has had on enrollments and WIOA metrics. The implementation and progress of the waiver utilization will be reviewed at a minimum, quarterly by programmatic, compliance, and fiscal staff with technical assistance being providing if needed.

In addition to the quarterly reports submitted by the Workforce Development Boards, OWD units will utilize the state's electronic case management system (MoJobs) to verify customer enrollments and outcomes. OWD's financial monitoring will utilize the Financial Reporting System (FRS) to monitor expenditures and lines items applicable to the waiver.

Most recent data regarding current waiver request provided.

Incumbent Worker Training				
Participants Served				
Region	PY 2021	PY 2022	PY 2023	PY 2024
Central Region	89	12	10	0
East Jackson	0	0	0	0
Jefferson/Franklin Consortium	20	32	21	43
Kansas City & Vicinity	0	0	0	0
North Region	8	1	0	0
Ozark Region	0	0	0	0
South Central Region	6	0	0	0
Southeast Region	0	0	0	0
Southwest Region	0	0	0	0
St. Charles County	0	0	0	0
St. Louis County	46	25	19	12
West Central Region	2	7	2	0
Total	171	77	52	55
Incumbent Worker Training				
Employers Served				
Region	PY 2021	PY 2022	PY 2023	PY 2024
Central Region	16	2	3	0
East Jackson	0	0	0	0
Jefferson/Franklin Consortium	10	11	5	6
Kansas City & Vicinity	0	0	0	0
North Region	1	1	0	0
Ozark Region	0	0	0	0
South Central Region	2	0	0	0
Southeast Region	0	0	0	0
Southwest Region	0	0	0	0
St. Charles County	0	0	0	0
St. Louis County	3	2	2	1
West Central Region	2	1	0	0
Total	34	17	10	7

Title I-B Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	No
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM and AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP)

Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)

All Program-Specific Requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

a. Employment Service Staff

1. Describe how the State will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act, such as through State employees, including but not limited to state merit staff employees, staff of a subrecipient, or some combination thereof.

(1) The Division of Employment Security (DES) under the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DOLIR) is primarily responsible for the payment of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits to claimants who are unemployed through no fault of their own and the collection of UI tax contributions from employers. Office of Workforce Development (OWD) which is under the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD) is responsible for the provision of employment and training services to various populations, including the unemployed.

Prior to 2018, Missouri's personnel law, located in chapter 36 of the Missouri Revised Statutes, required that all employees of certain agencies, including the employees of the Office of Workforce Development, have merit status. In 2018, the Missouri legislature amended the state personnel law to remove merit status for all employees except those who are required to be merit by "federal law or regulations for grant-in-aid programs." 36.030, RSMo. In its revised regulation at 20 CFR 652.215, the USDOL removed the requirement that labor exchange services be provided by State merit-staff and instead provides that W-P funded activities "can be provided through a variety of staffing models. They are not required to be provided by State merit-staff employees."

Upon publication of this final rule, the Office of Workforce Development had to remove the merit status of all its employees to comply with State of Missouri law. In the State of Missouri, all employees are at-will except when **required** by federal law. 20 CFR 652.215 no longer requires that W-P funded staff be merit, as a result OWD had to remove the merit status at the earliest possible opportunity to comply with State of Missouri law.

Office of Workforce Development staff was notified June 14, 2021, followed by a detailed presentation on June 16, 2021. Formal letters to employees were then sent to their

permanent addresses. Beginning on July 1, 2021, all remaining Missouri merit staff changed to at-will in the payroll system.

2. Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers

(2) In order to provide high quality services to both job seekers and employers the DES and OWD utilize a collaborative approach to provide training to continuously enhance the professional development for the Missouri Job Center staff. Various methods are utilized to present training to state staff and employers on new programs and services including: in-person training by subject matter experts from both agencies, webinars, videos imbedded in the state's case management system, program specific desk aides, on-the-job training, and conference calls.

OWD provides professional staff development for all state staff through various instructional methods - desk aids, webinars and conference calls, instructional videos, and in-person training. As initiatives and issuances are updated and implemented, OWD works with subject matter experts to provide relevant, accurate, and timely training. OWD also offers training as requested by Central Office staff, program managers, and job center staff. These trainings range from communication and teamwork to policy- and program-specific subjects. In fall of 2023, OWD developed a Registered Apprenticeship for those delivering Wagner-Peyser services in the job center. This apprenticeship will promote professional development through the attainment of the Certified Workforce Development Professional credential and will also focus on providing needed skills and on-the-job training to deliver quality services to customers.

3. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication

(3) Many unemployed Missourians may not be eligible for UI benefits; however, they could benefit from Wagner-Peyser and Title I services. Although the Division of Employment Security (DES) is limited in the assistance it can provide, Missouri Job Centers (MJC) under the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) offer valuable and much-needed help to the unemployed and underemployed. DES includes information regarding reemployment services available at MJC in many brochures, publications, posters and web pages. Additionally, all citizens that file a claim for UI benefits are pre-registered in OWD's jobs.mo.gov website, and therefore are effectively referred to OWD regardless of their UI eligibility. DES and OWD have an ongoing effort to provide the most current

information on the labor.mo.gov website, OWD's jobs.mo.gov website, and through social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) to assist claimants and other individuals seeking job center services with their reemployment process.

All claimants are sent an invitation for a free license to the Coursera platform to utilize the time they have to upskill or learn new skills through over 6,000 available courses. When a claimant is selected for a Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) appointment, they are given a license to the Reemployment Advantage Program specifically curated with courses designed to assist the claimant in reentering the job market.

DES and OWD's subject matter experts (SMEs) have prepared a series of webinars that are presented to all job center staff to assist them with acquiring a working knowledge of the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and how to better serve the UI claimant. These webinars are provided regularly to staff on Wednesdays through virtual training opportunities.

State staff members from the DES and OWD continue to work together to coordinate and improve efforts for MJC staff to identify potential eligibility issues concerning a claimant's status of being able and available for work and/or refusing suitable work or a referral to apply for suitable work. An automated process is in place for OWD staff to refer potential issues to the DES for investigation. Claimants may be determined ineligible to receive UI benefits when barriers to reemployment are discovered or they refuse to apply for suitable work as directed by MJC staff. This collaboration between the DES and OWD helps to ensure the integrity of the UI benefits program.

b. Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service

b) Missouri maintains an environment within both agencies that allows for data sharing and improved communications. In order to provide relevant information and meaningful assistance to UI claimants seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through Missouri's Job Centers (MJs), the Division of Employment Security (DES) and the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) established a priority phone line that allows a UI claimant that visits a job center to speak directly with a DES claim center specialist with little to no wait.

OWD, with assistance from DES, has developed information regarding the claim filing process to assist the UI claimant who seeks assistance at MJs. Brochures, publications, posters, and web pages have been updated and staff are trained on the current claim filing

process. DES and OWD conduct an ongoing effort to provide the most current information on the labor.mo.gov website, OWD's jobs.mo.gov website, and through social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) to assist claimants and other individuals seeking job center services with their reemployment process.

c. Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals

Through a collaborative partnership between the Division of Employment Security (DES) and the Office of Workforce Development (OWD), the state has developed a multifaceted approach to assisting UI claimants and other unemployed individuals return to work as quickly as possible. This includes improvement to data collection and sharing for enhanced responsiveness and self-service and the availability of tailored in-person or remote services at Missouri Job Centers.

Upon the initial filing of a UI claim the UI claimants are dually registered with the DES and OWD applications (websites). Additionally, claimants are provided real time information on existing job opportunities that match their skill set, work history and geographic preference when they file their initial claim and each week that they make a weekly request for payment.

Beyond this, the state staff administers a program that provides tailored in-person or remote service delivery assistance for select claimants to aid in their return to work. The Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program in Missouri, is a federally funded program that affords select claimants enhanced reemployment services and eligibility reviews. Priority for these services is first targeted toward transitioning former military and then recipients are selected in order of greatest need.

The primary goal of the RESEA program is for claimants to receive enhanced services that allow them to be better job candidates and return to employment in a shorter time frame. A secondary goal is to instill accountability for meeting UI eligibility requirements in an effort to protect the integrity of the UI program.

d. Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:

1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

1.The Division of Employment Security (DES) and the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) understand that reemploying claimants to reduce the average duration a claimant receives UI benefits is critical to the effective and efficient operation of each agency. To

accomplish this task, the DES and OWD continue to look for opportunities to use Wagner-Peyser funds to improve reemployment services.

The RESEA program is intended to identify UI claimants with a high potential for exhausting their regular UI benefit entitlement and direct them to reemployment services to accelerate their return to work. Claimants selected for RESEA are required to report to a Missouri Job Center (MJC) for one-on-one staff assisted services or by completing a remote RESEA by using person to person technologies such as Webex, Zoom, FaceTime, or other similar products. All RESEA participants receive an orientation to job center services and are assessed for individual skills. While meeting with state job center staff, in person or remotely, participants are given current labor market information and provided assistance with resume writing, job searching and other critical reemployment services.

Staff members from DES and OWD work together to coordinate and improve efforts to reemploy UI claimants. MJC state staff members identify potential eligibility issues related to claimants refusing suitable work or a referral to apply for suitable work. An automated process is in place for OWD staff to refer potential issues to the DES for investigation. Claimants may be determined ineligible to receive UI benefits when barriers to reemployment are discovered or they refuse to apply for suitable work as directed by Missouri Job Center staff. This collaboration between DES and OWD helps to ensure the integrity of the UI benefits program.

DES and OWD utilize a collaborative effort to further ensure the integrity of the UI program. With the assistance of enhanced systematic identity proofing at the time of filing, when a claimant fails automated identity proofing or the identity of a claimant is in question, an issue is set preventing payment on the claim and the claimant is required to report in person to a job center with documents to prove identity.

[2. Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;](#)

2. Missouri State law requires registration of UI claimants with the state's Employment Service. According to Missouri Revised Statutes Section 288.040.1(1) Eligibility for Benefits-Exceptions-Report contents, a claimant who is unemployed and has been determined to be an insured worker shall be eligible for benefits for any week only if the deputy finds that the claimant has registered for work at and thereafter has continued to report at an employment office in accordance with such regulations as the division may prescribe.

3. Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

3. The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) state staff are trained to identify potential UI eligibility issues, including, but not limited to, being able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work. This training includes how to properly document potential UI eligibility issues and how to transmit such documentation to the Division of Employment Security (DES) for adjudication in the feedback loop. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program leverages the feedback loop enabling the OWD to advise the DES whether selected claimant(s) report as directed, participate in the required RESEA service, and if a potential UI eligibility issue is detected.

At the time of filing of a UI claim through UInteract, the DES UI application, claimants receive real-time information on available jobs that meet the criteria, skillset and geographic preference the claimant provides at the time of filing. Additionally, claimants receive updated real-time job information each week the claimant files for payment of benefits.

Furthermore, all UI claimants are dually registered with OWD's website, jobs.mo.gov, Missouri's premier job matching site for both jobseekers and employers. By establishing a profile on job.mo.gov, the UI claimant will be notified when a job is posted that matches their skills and employment interests. Job referrals and placement are also provided when a claimant visits a Missouri Job Center.

4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

4. Missouri Job Center (MJC) staff provide outreach to individuals that have applied for and/or are receiving UI benefits. During this outreach or when a customer comes into a job center, information is provided about services that are available virtually and through the centers which includes current labor market information, job search assistance, and information on education and training options that are available. MJC staff provide options for claimants to participate in 5 core workshops: Career Exploration; Career Networking; Resume Preparation; Interview Process; and Basic Computer Skills.

If staff assisted services are provided during this outreach a Wagner-Peyser enrollment will be completed. If individuals are seeking training options, they take an assessment provided by the MJC. Those claimants assessed in need of skill upgrades are provided information on training and education programs and referred to a Title I provider if applicable to the individual's employment plan.

e. Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include an assessment of need. An assessment need describes the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

1. Assessment of Need. Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

1. Since many of the temporary farmworkers do not live close to their employer, housing and transportation are unique needs of the migrant seasonal farmworker (MSFW). Over 25% of employers who hire MSFWs provide some type of housing for their workers or provide some sort of transportation. As the Agricultural Employment Services (AES) staff visit with employers who are looking for workers, housing and transportation needs are pointed out as possible problems for workers. Staff works with the employer to help remedy these problems. Other vulnerable populations, such as the formerly incarcerated are provided job information for farmworker jobs that provide temporary housing from employers.

Missouri's Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) population is predominately Hispanic and South African. During spring and fall peak seasons the migrant worker population is estimated between 4,000 to 6,000 and during non-peak season it is estimated to be less than 1000. While housing and transportation are the two primary needs of farmworkers, other needs include child care, legal aid and medical service referrals. This is based on information gathered during outreach activities performed by State Workforce Agency (SWA) staff and the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) to migrant camps and employers.

2. An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) Identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State

2. Assessment of agricultural activity

1. Top Five Labor Intensive Crops, Heavy Season and Location of Crops

According to the Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri ranks second in the nation in the number of farm operations. Missouri's crops, livestock processing and other agricultural sectors account for approximately \$16 billion per year. The top five labor-intensive crops for Missouri are: apples, grain, watermelon, cotton and grapes. Missouri's highest-value crops by total revenue are not as labor-intensive as specialty crops which often involve more hand-labor versus automation. A majority of the heavy activity occurs in the months beginning as early as March and continuing through October. The main geographic areas of prime activity are in the Southeast, West Central and Southwest Local Workforce Development Areas.

2. Agricultural Employers' Needs

The Office of Workforce Development's (OWD) AES staff work closely within the agricultural sector to identify the needs of farmers, producers and agricultural businesses and to provide assistance to fulfill those needs. Currently, the biggest factor affecting agriculture in Missouri is a reliable, qualified workforce. The new generations of previously migrant families seek employment in industries outside of agriculture, creating a shortage in available workers. Many of the farmers, producers and agricultural businesses have the desire to increase their production but are held back from expanding due to the lack of farm workers. Therefore, Missouri employers and Farm Labor Contractors are increasing their labor force by hiring foreign workers on an H-2A temporary, agricultural visa. Agricultural employers using this H-2A visa program seek guidance with labor law compliance.

3. Factors affecting agriculture in the state

Missouri agriculture is impacted greatly by weather conditions including rainfall, drought and temperatures. Pestilence and disease are continuous factors creating field crop problems. Missouri has a number of opportunities for agricultural producers to research and explore solutions through the University of Missouri Extension Services and the Department of Agriculture. Often quickly identifying a problem and finding a solution to remedy it can prevent negative impacts to crops. As producers find better ways to grow their crops, they have seasons that require additional labor. During peak harvest season it is important to have access to a strong agricultural workforce that can assist producers in garnering the greatest yield from their crops. Additional factors with adverse impact in the state include production costs, market volatility, and regulatory compliance.

3. An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration

3. Assessment of Need

MSFW Characteristics

Missouri's migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) have a variety of surprising characteristics. As the Agricultural Employment Services (AES) staff visit with the agricultural employers hiring farmworkers, they are finding MSFWs originate from a variety of locations. MSFWs are predominantly from Mexico and a few from Nicaragua, Salvador, and other Central American countries. In addition to workers of Hispanic origin, the farm workers include individuals of Haitian, Bosnian, South African, and Burmese descent. Additionally, American citizens can qualify as a migrant and/or seasonal farm worker. The predominant languages spoken include Spanish, French, and English.

Local WDB and One-Stop Job Center Partnership

The Office of Workforce Development and the Local Workforce Development Boards have an MOU with the 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee, United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. (UMOS), to ensure the most effective and efficient utilization of the funds provided by US Department of Labor for administration and operation of the statewide Migrant Seasonal Farmworker's outreach program. Through MO's labor exchange system, staff can make provider referrals to both NFJP, WIOA Title I staff, and other job center partners.

Peak Season

At peak time, especially during the harvest season, there can be as many as 6,000 MSFWs in Missouri. This will go down to approximately less than 1,000 during the low season. The large majority of MSFWs are year-round farmworkers; there are some seasonal and farmworkers who migrate from other states like Florida, Iowa, Nebraska, and Texas. Many of the MSFWs desire to stay in permanent jobs and not have to move around. They also want to stay in the agricultural field, so UMOS and the Missouri Job Centers, diligently work to help move the MSFWs into full time permanent positions. For MSFWs who seek training

and jobs in non-agricultural fields, UMOs and Missouri Job Centers continue to collaborate to facilitate training programs, funding, job referrals, and any other supportive services needed for MSFW customers.

4. Outreach Activities

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

4) AOP Outreach Activities

1. Full-time Agricultural Employment Services (AES) outreach staff are domiciled to provide outreach across Missouri. During peak season, AES staff spend a large majority of their time in the field, at MSFW gathering locations, and events with MSFW presence. During non-peak season, the AES staff travels throughout the entire state and connects with other local organizations and agricultural employers to locate MSFWs. The AES staff has completed training on outreach responsibilities and duties. Other trainings are coordinated among organizations such as Wage and Hour Division, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) human trafficking program. Trainings on identifying an MSFW and services to be provided, as well as Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System, and Agricultural Recruitment System are provided to Missouri Job Center staff through webinars. Additional interactive trainings are available on the State's Learning Management System and through virtual webinars to assist staff to fill in any knowledge gaps there may be. This strategy increases local program knowledge and increases MSFW registrations for Missouri providing a wide range of services to the farmworkers and agricultural employers.

Missouri currently employs two MSFW outreach staff. During the low season there are less than 1,000 MSFWs in the state. The majority of farmworkers in Missouri are year-round and do not move around.

A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices

UMOS staff plays huge role in outreach activities to assist the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) in contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by normal intake activities. In addition, OWD is continuing to identify and build partnerships with Migrant Education Program, Legal Aid of Western Missouri – Migrant Farmworker Project, Migrant Farmworkers Assistance Fund, College Assistance Migrant Program, MU Extension, and faith-based organizations to conduct outreach in order to direct more MSFWs to the local job centers.

Recognizing that most migrant farmworkers will not access services through normal intake activities by the Missouri Jobs Centers, Missouri is strengthening its partnership with UMOS's (Missouri NJFP grantee) staff to include joint outreach to this population. In addition, OWD staff participate in local job fairs and community events throughout the state to expand awareness to this population about the services that are available. Missouri has hired dedicated outreach staff to perform these duties in, but not limited to, the areas of high concentration of migrant workers. Current outreach staff also work with the local workforce boards to encourage a natural collaboration and communication among the partners and the UMOS staff.

B. Providing technical assistance to outreach staff. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System ("Complaint System" described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) and outreach staff attend all program related conferences and training opportunities offered, both in-state and out-of-state. This information is then shared with the appropriate staff in all Missouri Job Centers.

The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) and United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) have developed an MOU that allows for combined training to job center staff by the SMA and UMOS local staff. OWD has also collaborated with UMOS to develop brochures and other outreach materials that feature both agencies and their available services.

The MSFW training presentations are provided to job center state staff and AES outreach staff through webinars and in-person training. At a minimum, the training continues to be provided to all appropriate job center staff at least once a year and available for new staff or upon request any time during the year.

Examples of trainings provided to staff include:

Identifying the Farmworker

All Missouri Job Centers (MJC) must offer the MSFWs equal access to a full range of employment services, and while providing these services be sensitive to their preferences, skills and the availability of agricultural job opportunities. In order to accomplish this, all MJC must identify and serve all farmworkers in a qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate manner. This training empowers each MJC to gain

competence and compliance in meeting this regulation. Participants learn how to identify, conduct intakes and serve the MSFWs living and working in local areas. It provides the demographic and agricultural information for each respective area.

Employment Service (ES) and Employment-Related Law Complaint System Training

Webinars provide an in-depth review of the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint system process. Participants learn the different types of complaints, actions to take on them, how to identify a valid complaint, how to identify when complaints are taken in writing, proper documentation of complaints, recording and reporting ES related complaints and the actions to take on them. These training sessions provide all participants the skills and tools needed to successfully process all employment related complaints in the MJC's pertaining to the ES and Employment-Related Law Complaint System. These webinars also focus on multiple federal agencies and the laws they enforce. At the end of the training session, staff are able to identify the federal agencies that would process complaints alleging employment-related law violations. The webinars provide an overview of the forms required and how to fill them out. In addition, they provide the information for further processing of a complaint.

C. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues

The MSFW training presentations are provided to job center staff and AES outreach staff through interactive computer-based webinars and in-person training. Training on UI program and eligibility issues is provided to both job center staff and AES outreach staff. The training is available on OWD's Learning Management System. At a minimum, subject experts provide the training to all appropriate job center staff and AES outreach staff at least once a year and is available for new staff or upon request any time during the year. Once a year an experienced UI staff also provides job shadowing training to AES outreach staff.

The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) and UMOS have developed a MOU that will allow for combined training to job center staff by OWD's SMA and UMOS local staff. OWD has also worked with UMOS to develop brochures and other outreach materials that feature both agencies and the services available. AES staff will be able to assist farmworkers with UI claims during the off-season.

In order to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers, the Division of Employment Security and OWD utilize a collaborative approach to provide training and continuously improve professional development for the Missouri Job Center staff. Various

methods are utilized to present training to staff on new programs and services including in-person training by subject matter experts from both agencies, webinars, videos imbedded in the OWD web portal, program specific desk aides, on-the-job training, and conference calls.

D. Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers

Missouri Job Center state staff are trained via webinars and in-person to offer the MSFWs equal access to a full range of employment services, and in providing these services, how to be sensitive to preferences, skills, and availability of agricultural job opportunities. In order to accomplish this, job center state staff must identify and serve farmworkers in an equitable manner. These interactive training webinars empower each job center to accomplish compliance in meeting regulations. Participants learn how to identify, conduct intake and serve the MSFWs. Additionally, they are provided demographic and agricultural information for each local area. Trainings are completed on outreach throughout the state that require at least one local staff person to attend. This strategy increases local program knowledge and increases MSFW registrations for Missouri. It also provides information regarding a wide range of services to the farmworkers and agricultural employers. In addition, MSFW Outreach Workers staff may attend national training as available to learn best practices from other states and partners.

E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups

The Office of Workforce Development, Local Workforce Development Boards, and their sub recipients continue to partner with local agencies whenever possible including the WIOA Title I section 167 grantee. The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) and the 167 grantee, United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), have a signed MOU. The purpose of the MOU is to ensure the most effective and efficient utilization of the funds provided for the MSFW program. OWD and UMOS will continue to work together as partners to provide a full spectrum of services to Missouri's MSFW's and agricultural employers. OWD and UMOS worked together to develop brochures and other outreach materials that featuring both agencies and the services they provide in English and Spanish. These brochures are used during outreach with both employers and MSFWs to increase knowledge about employment and training services.

Missouri's Migrant Farmworkers Assistance Fund and churches are two active partners. Local churches provide a variety of supportive services including food, rent money, clothing, and transportation. Migrant Farmworkers Assistance Fund provides health assistance, legal referral, and hunger relief services. Outreach tools include printed

materials and personal contact. Personal contact results in better performance outcomes. This method is also the preferred method of outreach for the workers. On-site interaction gives workers the opportunity to have questions answered with intake completed via laptop.

As part of the marketing efforts an agricultural services page was implemented on Facebook. The communications unit work with the SMA and AES outreach staff to post content regarding MSFW services in the already establish Jobs Mo Gov (JMG) Facebook page. MSFW services will have its own scheduling slot and branding within JMG. Social media increases the ability to reach jobseekers who are seeking agricultural employment and agricultural employers who need farmworkers.

5. Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:

- i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers
- ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services
(A) The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) provides Wagner-Peyser funded services to migrant and seasonal workers (MSFWs) and to prospective and active employers of these individuals. OWD makes every effort to strengthen its working relationships with MSFWs and employers to encourage utilization of Missouri Job Centers. Efforts continue to include the full range of the Missouri Job Center services delivered through an outreach effort designed to locate, contact, and inform migrant and seasonal farmworkers about the employment and training services available statewide and particularly in the Southeast, Southwest and West Central local workforce development areas. Additional efforts include ensuring that MSFW customers are referred to the 167 grantees for assistance.

OWD ensures that MSFWs are offered an equitable range of employment services, benefits and protections, including counseling, testing and job training referral services, which are the same services available to non-MSFWs.

Career Services provided through the Missouri Job Centers include:

- Registration for Wagner-Peyser and other services, including Title I Career Services
- Explanation and use of jobs.mo.gov

- Career counseling, including development of career pathways
- Job matching and referral to job openings
- Job development
- Assistance in improving job seeking skills
- Testing
- Assessment
- Referrals to supportive services and other providers including UMOS, 167 NFJP grantee
- Information on employment and training opportunities
- Labor market information
- Information on the job Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System, including filing and processing of complaints, and Complaint System poster

In-take Process

Upon first arriving at a Missouri Job Center, the following methods are used to provide career services:

- Adequately identifying the MSFW at the point of registration;
- Explaining services available;
- Assessing the immediate needs of the farmworker;
- Referral to appropriate service providers, including Title I WIOA as needed; and
- Systematic follow-up with each individual to ensure their needs are met.

Upon completion of intake, the MSFWs training needs are assessed. Often completion of training or an upgrade of skills is difficult to accomplish because workers have a family they must support along with a lack of resources such as time or transportation. If training is possible and necessary, then the participant is referred to the Missouri Job Center WIOA Title I for evaluation. If training options do not meet the individual's needs, then referral to other service providers such as the 167 NFJP Grantee, UMOS, will be made. In addition, English as a Second Language (ESL) and high school equivalency classes are provided by Migrant Education Programs throughout the state.

To better serve the agriculture employer, OWD provides outreach and awareness training about the services available to assist in their agriculture businesses. The jobs.mo.gov website has a dedicated AES page promoting services to agricultural employers. The AES page contains related resources such as the Agricultural Recruitment System guide flyers for both employers and jobseekers. The OWD jobs.mo.gov website includes valuable information for all employers, including information on job postings and recruitment services, work-based learning programs, available tools to help assess employees, available workshops for employers, links to business resources and contact information for business services staff throughout the state.

OWD strives to improve services to agriculture employers by reaching out to better learn how OWD can be of assistance and tailor services specific to the agriculture community. AES staff attend agricultural- related conferences, farm fests, and other venues enabling outreach staff to interact with the agriculture employer. As new information is gained OWD continues to update the website and outreach materials to stay current with the agriculture employers' needs. OWD's Community Development Team staff also regularly contact employers to provide tailored services.

B. Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups

(B) The Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development's (DHEWD) communications unit has assisted the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) and MSFW outreach staff in developing a marketing campaign regarding the employment service complaint system. Brochures and posters have been designed and placed in Missouri's Job Centers with materials from other agencies that serve or contact agricultural employers and farmworker advocacy groups. The SMA and outreach staff attend agriculture related conferences as exhibitors. Participation allows interaction and outreach opportunities with agricultural employers and advocacy groups in attendance. Missouri employers have a dedicated webpage on jobs.mo.gov. The employer and jobseeker services menu includes information on the employment service complaint system.

C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers (ARS) to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

(C) The OWD Community Development Team, Local Business Outreach Teams and MSFW outreach staff solicit job orders from agricultural employers on a regular basis. MSFW outreach staff coordinate employer outreach and marketing with business teams prior to making contact with the agricultural employer. Both the business team and MSFW outreach staff utilize a common case management system. All employer contacts are recorded within the case management system ensuring no duplication of services. In

addition to the outreach efforts indicated above local business outreach teams, MSFW outreach staff closely coordinate with multiple agencies, such as UMOS, the WIOA 167 NFJP grantee, Chambers of Commerce, local economic development organizations and educational agencies to ensure business needs are met. Close coordination results in streamlined efficient service delivery, while preserving the integrity of the program and avoiding duplication.

The jobs.mo.gov website has a dedicated AES page promoting services to agricultural employers. The AES page contains related resources such as the Agricultural Recruitment System guide flyers for both employers and jobseekers. The jobs.mo.gov website includes valuable information for all employers, including information on job postings, recruitment services, work-based learning programs, assessment tools for employees, workshops for employers, links to business resources and contact information for business services staff throughout the state. Every new business registrant in jobs.mo.gov is contacted by a representative from the local business team who offers additional workforce system services.

The OWD communications unit works closely with the SMA and MSFW outreach staff to ensure marketing strategies are current. The jobs.mo.gov website is updated with current information for agricultural employers. Brochures and flyers to promote agricultural employment services are revised on a regular basis and social media is utilized to promote services, agricultural conferences and events throughout the year. OWD continually searches for new and improved methods to increase publicity. A brochure was developed by OWD in partnership with UMOS for agricultural outreach in addition to a social media campaign. The SMA produces a quarterly Agricultural Employment Services newsletter which stresses the commitment of improving the quality and accessibility of agricultural employment services for both workers and stakeholders. It also increases awareness of farm safety practices.

6. Other Requirements

A. Collaboration

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

A. The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) continues to partner with local agencies, including the WIOA Title I section 167 grantee, United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS). OWD and UMOS have a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The

purpose of the MOU is to ensure the most effective and efficient utilization of funds provided for the MSFW and coordination of services. OWD and UMOS continue to work together as partners to provide a full spectrum of services to MSFWs and agricultural employers. OWD does not have any additional written agreements, however, partnerships are in place with community service and other organizations that provide assistance to MSFWs. Missouri Migrant Education Program, Legal Aid of Western Missouri – Migrant Farmworkers Project, Migrant Farmworkers Assistance Fund, and churches are active partners. Local churches provide a variety of supportive services including food, rent money, clothing, and transportation. Migrant Education provides education and human resource service opportunities that strengthen and enhance the development of the migrant children and families. The Migrant Farmworkers Project provides free legal assistance, legal education and referrals to both migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

All opportunities to interact with other agencies that serve MSFW's will be explored and followed up on to develop meaningful partnerships.

Through development of Infrastructure Funding Agreement process, all local workforce regions have engaged directly with the NJFP provider. Additionally, local staff now have the capacity to pull reports from OWD's MoJobs system, which help identify MSFW participants in local areas. This report also allows better partnering between local regions to ensure that new referrals can be made to the NJFP partner. Finally, Missouri state leadership has connected directly with UMOS at the national level to have discussions on how to better partner as we move forward.

Aside from external collaboration, the SWA prioritizes internal cross team collaboration, which allows for efforts to serve MSFW participants through apprenticeship programs, FAFSA and other Higher Education/Workforce Development programs and services.

B. Review and Public Comment

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons; therefore, and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

B. In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107(d)(1), (2), and (3), OWD gives notice that the Missouri Wagner-Peyser Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) will be available for public comment to UMOS, Inc. (WIOA Section 167) grantee and other appropriate groups.

The WIOA State Plan, including the AOP, is available during a public comment period on Missouri's labor exchange system and shared with partners. The State Monitor Advocate communicates with UMOS encouraging comments on the AOP.

The Office of Workforce Development and the Local Workforce Development Boards have an MOU with the 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee, United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. (UMOS). This ensures the most effective and efficient utilization of the funds provided by US Department of Labor for administration and operation of the statewide Migrant Seasonal Farmworker's outreach program. Through MO's labor exchange system, staff can make provider referrals to both NFJP, WIOA Title I staff, and other job center partners.

The MOU also allows for combined training to job center staff by OWD's SMA and UMOS local staff. OWD and UMOS worked together to develop brochures and other outreach materials that feature both agencies and the services they provide in English and Spanish.

OWD sends the AOP draft and solicits input from MSFW organizations in Missouri including, but not limited to, Migrant Farmworkers Assistance Fund, Migrant Farmworkers Project, College Assistance Migrant Program, and Migrant Education Program. MSFW outreach staff regularly work to expand collaboration with these outside organizations to coordinate outreach activities and bolster MSFW access to services.

Missouri received no comments during the public comment period or in the development of this plan.

C. Data Assessment

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

C. During PY24, the state met seven out of the eight Equity Ratio Indicators and one of the Three Minimum Service Level Indicators. In 2023, the state met six out of the eight Equity Ratio Indicators and one of the three Minimum Service Level Indicators. During PY 2022 the state ended Quarter 4 meeting six out of eight Equity Ratio Indicators and one of three Minimum Service Level Indicators. Although there are MSFWs seeking services through the local job service centers, there are significantly more being served through outreach efforts.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker services are operated with Wagner-Peyser funding used to support key positions. These include the State Monitor Advocate and outreach staff. Missouri's goal is to increase registrations and services to MSFWs through active participation by Job Center staff, and engagement with partners making outreach goals achievable. OWD conducts outreach to workers in groups as well as one-on-one consultations with overall results of increased registrations.

Missouri has had significant staff turnover working with the MSFW population which has affected performance. Currently, Missouri has a strong team that plans on increasing awareness of MSFW and conducting training across the state. MSFW outreach performance has significantly increased over the past two program years. This performance measurement was based on data from MSFW contacts made by outreach reported internally and to the Department of Labor quarterly and annually. The MSFW program continues to strive for further improvement relative to equity ratio. Missouri currently has significant MSFW status and continues to strive to improve overall services to MSFW population for quantitatively proportionate and qualitatively equivalent of those provided to all other applicants. Missouri continues ongoing reviews of performance data, training to job center staff and collaboration with NFJP provider.

D. Assessment of Progress

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

D. Although there are MSFWs seeking services through the local job service centers, there are significantly more being served through outreach efforts which can hinder immediate access to a full range of services. Training continues to be provided in an on-going basis to all job center staff; however, Missouri also provides additional one-on-one training with each point of contact person in all job centers to develop strategies relevant to the local areas for addressing the issue.

In relation to the previous AOP, Missouri achievements include increasing partnerships with agricultural employers; improving outreach for meeting basic needs of food clothing, shelter and education; and providing faith-based support services. In addition, Missouri has straightened our partnership with UMOS, the 167 NFJP grantee. Together we are meeting and collaborating on MSFW efforts quarterly. However, Missouri still has a gap in meeting our goals. Missouri is increasing training across the state to remedy this.

Partnerships at the local level are critical to the MSFW program. Local office staff as well as the SMA strive to establish and maintain working partnerships with agricultural employers, agricultural associations, and the migrant and seasonal farmworker population.

Missouri cooperates with migrant service providers to conduct outreach and to ensure a wide variety of needs are met (food, clothing, shelter, education). OWD's biggest partner is UMOS, the 167 NFJP grantee. The organization's sole focus is the migrant farmworker and their family. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is established between OWD, the local workforce development boards and UMOS.

In addition, small and large churches are utilized to help provide supportive services such as transportation to worksites, clothes and lodging. Community organizations such as food pantries, clothing stores and temporary shelter providers provided basic needs to the farm worker and their families who sometimes travel long distances for a job. The Migrant Farmworkers Project provides a range of free legal assistance to both migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

OWD understands the criticality of having adequate staffing levels for AOP outreach. OWD recruits staff members who speak Spanish to better serve the farmworker community, and periodically evaluates staffing levels for outreach to ensure adequate coverage statewide.

E. State Monitor Advocate

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

E. The State Monitor Advocate participated in the preparation of the agricultural plan and has been afforded the opportunity to approve and comment on the plan. Such review indicates that the plan has been prepared properly, omitting none of the prescribed requirements and properly describing the activities planned for providing services to both agricultural employers and migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFWs).

OWD's State Monitor Advocate reviewed and approved the Agricultural Outreach Plan which was submitted as part of the Missouri Combined State Plan.

Wagner-Peyser Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	
5. The SWA has established and maintains a self-appraisal system for ES operations to determine success in reaching goals and to correct deficiencies in performance (20 CFR 658.601).	Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) launched "Show-Me Success," a significant improvement effort to guarantee every student's superior preparation and performance in school and life. Missouri's goal is that all students will graduate ready for success. Missouri's K-12 Learning Standards define the knowledge and skills students need in each grade level and course for success in college, other post-secondary training, careers, and citizenship. The Standards ensure that students learn basic and higher-order skills, including problem-solving and critical thinking. These standards are relevant to the real world and reflect the knowledge and skills students need to achieve their goals.

The College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) provide the basis for the MPWS Adult Education Standards and align closely with the K-12 Standards. The Missouri Adult Education Standards intend to provide a framework for programs to develop the curriculum to prepare students to achieve their goals. These goals could include obtaining employment, enrollment in post-secondary options, and developing the language and life skills needed to be a part of the culture of the United States. The MPWS Adult Education Standards offer guidance in academic areas such as applied math, reading comprehension, communication (verbal, written, and listening), critical thinking and problem-solving, technology, and gathering/evaluating information. Additionally, the MPWS cultivates a focus on work readiness skills such as career development and planning, professional behavior, accountability, interpersonal skills, and self-management.

In Missouri, the basis of all adult education, literacy, and English language acquisition activities must be the CCRS. Local providers must incorporate CCRS into their instruction and participate in professional development (PD) related to CCRS. The MPWS carefully reviewed its AEL CCRS professional development requirements and discovered they were ineffective and outdated. Instead of one focused CCRS PD opportunity, AEL used state and local program staff to revise all courses, incorporating the standards into each. In the future, all AEL-sponsored PD opportunities will include applicable portions of CCRS, encouraging instructors to incorporate them into all lessons.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in

section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

The MPWS distributes AEL (Sec. 231), Corrections Education (Sec. 225), and IELCE (Sec. 243) funds through a three-year competitive grant/contract cycle, most recently completed in May 2023, as described in Core Element Section III of this plan. Eligible service providers within the state are funded, enabling the development, implementation, and improvement of local adult education and literacy activities. Applications are competitive, open, and available to all eligible applicants. Eligible service providers must use the funding to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities and English language acquisition concurrently with civics and workplace training for the MPWS.

Using the 13 considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and 34 CFR 463 subpart C, the MPWS creates local AEL provider bid specifications. Applicants must respond to each consideration, and the MPWS evaluates responses before awarding grants. Each funded program commits to providing one or more of the Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA). Applicants for AEL funding describe the delivery of allowable services and must address each of the considerations for the provided activities. The MPWS defines the eight WIOA Title II

services in the Invitation for Bids described in Section 203 of the Act and ensures equitable access to those services through the AEL network of providers.

Available funds are divided by LWDB region based on need. Then, the MPWS determines local AEL allocations based on the ranking of applications received, established by scoring the applications. The standardized scoring scale includes regional needs based on MERIC data, demonstrated effectiveness, budget, program operations, LWDB review, alignment with the local workforce, and WIOA partnerships.

Through AEL service providers, the MPWS delivers adult education, literacy, IET, workforce preparation activities, workplace AEL, and English language acquisition. Four local programs provide Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE). The MPWS integrates basic and secondary education with participants' educational goals and their identified career pathways. In many cases, the integration of services leads to secondary attainment and an industry-recognized credential or post-secondary enrollment. The MPWS supports these efforts through policy, educator certification, professional development, data analysis, monitoring, partnership development, and maintaining a network of adult educators.

1. Adult education

The MPWS has 28 providers of adult education services with over 175 physical and virtual classes. More than 500 educators receive innovative professional development from the MPWS to ensure students have the skills needed for secondary school attainment. Adult education curricula must incorporate CCR standards into instruction, and the MPWS monitors service delivery and student outcomes.

2. Literacy

Literacy is the core of AEL programming for the MPWS. All programs providing adult education activities focus on literacy as the primary skill to continue education into adulthood. With the creation of the Office of Literacy at DESE, support for these efforts is growing with a focus on the science of reading. Each AEL classroom and lesson utilizes the latest literacy research for Missouri's 12,000 plus adult learners annually.

3. Workplace adult education and literacy activities

Through AEL service providers, the MPWS offers adult education and English acquisition as an employer service to recruit and retain employees. The MPWS identifies employers with team members lacking the skills to progress in their career pathway. AEL providers set up classrooms on-site and provide education, most often English acquisition, delivering mutual benefit to adult students and the employer. All programs in Missouri are equipped for these services when the need arises.

4. Family literacy activities

The MPWS utilizes all of its WIOA Title II resources on other AEL services and does not fund Family Literacy. Local programs coordinate with other services and funding to meet this need.

5. English language acquisition activities

The MPWS has seen a 144% increase in enrollment for English language students since 2020. Statewide AEL support of services designed to meet the needs of these adult students has increased

through assessments, educator professional development, partnerships, and data analysis. The MPWS is equipped, through AEL service providers, to serve over 5,000 English students and is prepared to address more growth.

6. Integrated English literacy and civics education

The MPWS funds four local AEL programs offering Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) that span Missouri's geography. These programs prepare approximately 900 students annually for a career and a successful life in the United States. AEL grant specifications require the provision of IELCE services collectively with integrated education and training (IET) activities. It is a priority that IELCE services combine with IET activities that serve the current needs of students and the community. Local IELCE service providers strive to help adult learners through partnerships for supportive services, workplace literacy, and occupational skills training. The local provider must have instructional materials aligning with the Employability Skills Framework.

7. Workforce preparation activities

The MPWS requires that AEL providers integrate workforce preparation activities into all adult education, literacy, and English language acquisition activities. Depending on the local area, Title I may provide workforce preparation activities through the co-enrollment of Title II students. In other regions, the AEL provider delivers workforce preparation activities. The MPWS monitors the implementation of workforce preparation in AEL classrooms and uses follow-up outcomes to evaluate success.

8. Integrated education and training

The MPWS developed a five-year strategic plan to expand Integrated Education and Training (IET) and ensure quality of services. AEL providers offer IETs in all areas of the state that focus on workforce development needs identified in the local plan, such as K-12 education, manufacturing, healthcare, IT, and logistics. Through technical assistance and professional development, the MPWS continues to push AEL service providers to develop partnerships that will lead to more IET programming to expand the reach beyond a few dozen participants.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following correctional educational programs identified in section 225 of WIOA:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The MPWS's correctional adult education program for institutionalized individuals has been operating successfully for over 20 years. As section 225 of WIOA prescribes, the MPWS uses up to 20% of its AEFLA instructional allocation for the cost of adult educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals. Corrections adult education programs include classrooms in prisons, jails, reformatories, work farms, detention centers, halfway houses, community-based rehabilitation centers, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.

AEL providers for justice-involved individuals must apply through Missouri's competitive bid process, as described in section b. above. Corrections Education applicants must provide a detailed narrative addressing how they will meet each of the 13 considerations, in addition to priority of service, support of transition to reentry initiatives, and connection to post-release services. All applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria.

The IFB includes the expectation that providers will deliver the following services to offenders based on need and situational feasibility:

1. Adult education and literacy activities (AEL);
2. Special Education as determined by the eligible agency
3. Career pathways
4. Concurrent Enrollment
5. Peer tutoring when feasible
6. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services to reduce recidivism.

The MPWS funds correctional educational programs that prioritize serving individuals likely to leave the correctional institution within five years. State law requires all offenders without a high school diploma or high school equivalency to earn an HSE or exhibit continuous, honest, good-faith academic success to be eligible for parole. DOC employs approaches to offender educational services that increase educational levels and provide skills for self-sufficiency to reduce the recidivism rate.

The MPWS offers corrections adult education and literacy activities through DOC and other local service providers, including HSE preparation. These activities focus on improvement in servicing literacy students, improving language skills in NRS levels, preparing for the HSE, and preparing offenders to reenter society as productive citizens. The MPWS provides correctional IET through the Employability Skills program, which delivers workforce training, and life skills that help offenders acclimate to their community upon reentry. Corrections AEL programs offer a curriculum in job preparation (resume building, interview preparation), workforce skills, and family life skills concurrently with the adult education curriculum, which includes instruction in reading, writing,

speaking, and mathematics. Curriculum materials provide real-life contexts and align with CCR standards. Where situationally feasible, instruction may include peer tutoring.

The MPWS serves justice-involved individuals with disabilities using special education instructional strategies linked to the student's learning styles. DOC and AEL programs provide accommodations, including signers or interpreters, tutors for one-on-one instruction, adaptations such as color overlays, and large key calculators. Justice-involved Missourians receive accommodations per official guidelines when completing NRS-approved skill assessments and the High School Equivalency exam.

The MPWS connects incarcerated adult students to career pathways through several options. Integrating AEL services concurrently with workforce preparation activities serves to prepare students for the workforce upon their release. Additionally, DOC offers opportunities for post-secondary education, including self-pay and study with an accredited college. DOC also provides some eligible individuals with post-secondary access and vocational classes free of charge based on DOC criteria. The MPWS offers students opportunities to build skills through these career pathway options through workforce training and education. These skills assist with obtaining and retaining employment and in reducing recidivism.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs under section 243 of WIOA. Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

IELCE providers must apply through Missouri's competitive bid process as described in section b. above. Applications to provide IELCE services must include a detailed narrative addressing how

programs will meet each of the 13 considerations specified in section 231 of WIOA and 34 CFR 463 subpart C. Additionally, applications must include a description of the requirements described in 34 CFR 463.73 specific to IELCE programming. Through a competitive grant process that coincides with AEL grant allocations, the MPWS funds four IELCE programs. The MPWS selected these service providers for their focus on integration with workforce training, demonstrated effectiveness, and targeted services for specific subpopulations.

IELCE providers serve adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries. Lessons enable such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Services include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. Based on information obtained from program self-assessments, the MPWS works one-on-one with other English language acquisition providers to expand access to IELCE services across the state. This effort addresses a need identified through enrollment data.

As section 243(a) of WIOA prescribes, the MPWS provides occupational training and workplace readiness concurrently and contextually with English acquisition by offering IETs to all IELCE students. Missouri's local IELCE programs work closely with the MPWS; all four IELCE program directors serve on their LWDB. Local provider personnel contribute to LWDB sub-committees focusing on essential workplace skills, service for students with disabilities, and employer engagement. IELCE program staff participate in regional NEXUS group meetings to connect directly with employers in their area.

Relationships developed through the MPWS with employers, community organizations, and WIOA partners have contributed to the success of the IELCE and IET combination. Employers provide a career pathway and occupationally relevant materials from which to instruct. Community partners offer cultural connections and supportive services. WIOA partners assist with accommodations and workplace readiness. Programs have aligned these partnerships and braided services to prepare English learners for a career in an in-demand occupation and to be productive citizens of the United States. The MPWS assists local providers in developing community partnerships, utilizing existing resources to sustain IELCE programming into the future, understanding that local sources are critical to supplementing Sec. 243 funding.

Through this initiative, adult students learning English receive certifications in welding, carpentry, masonry, painting, medical office support, and more. In addition, they can attain certifications in medical terminology, blood-borne pathogens, phlebotomy, HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act), first aid, and Certified Medical Assistant. Job Corps also offers AEL students ServSafe Food Handlers, Handcuffing Certification, Oleoresin Capsicum Spray Certification, Police Expandable Baton Certification, OSHA 10+, Power Actuated Tools, Lead Awareness, and Building Construction Fundamentals. IELCE service providers place students with YouthBuild, the Department of Labor, Full Employment Council, Job Corps, The Sewing Labs, Allied Health, Truman Medical Center, Shoppes Toyota, and the LWDBs for St. Charles County, Eastern Jackson County, and Kansas City.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

Per section 223 of WIOA, the MPWS uses less than 12.5 percent of AEL funds to carry out State Leadership activities to enhance Missouri's adult education system, including the following endeavors.

Alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other one-stop required partners to implement the strategies in the Unified or Combined State Plan as described in section 223(1)(A).

AEL works collaboratively with the MPWS to align and coordinate services for program participants. State and local cross-training help staff understand intake, eligibility screening, partner referral, and program services. State AEL staff participate in the Missouri Association of Workforce Development to build connections with the MPWS. State and local AEL staff contribute to DHEWD's Adult Learner Network (ALN) for post-secondary attainment and AEL is represented in two tactics named in the ALN Strategic Plan.

In addition, the MPWS will focus on developing all components of career pathways to prepare adult students for careers in in-demand occupations. Partnership investments have yielded the implementation of Missouri's IET Strategic Plan, which develops successful integration of occupational and workplace training into AEL classrooms statewide.

Establishment or operation of a high-quality professional development program as described in section 223(1)(b).

With AEL State Leadership Funds, the MPWS provides essential high-quality professional development to improve educational and career outcomes for the adult student population. Missouri requires certification for every teacher instructing AEL students who must participate in ongoing professional development to maintain their teaching license. The MPWS sponsors a portion of the professional development led by subject matter experts, DESE staff, a pool of AEL-certified teachers, or certified K-12 teachers with expertise in the designated workshop. AEL offers in-person training, virtual live training, and virtual on-demand training.

The MPWS utilizes leadership funds to employ two part-time professional development (PD) specialists who maintain the AEL professional development program and implement strategic changes in the program design. Tactical results include more diversification in program offerings and formats and incorporating embedded CCR standards into all appropriate workshops. The specialists plan and execute the annual AEL Directors' Conference, an in-person learning opportunity for program leaders. In addition, the MPWS provides a Virtual Learning Management System for access to and tracking AEL instructor PD.

The MPWS has a statewide Adult Education Professional Development Advisory Committee comprising AEL local program directors from each state region. It meets with AEL staff as needed every 2-3 months. The committee members determine regional PD needs by seeking input from all teachers and all local adult education directors. During their meetings, the committee helps develop

PD plans and resources, identify future PD needs, identify and implement best practices in PD, coordinate PD activities, and review proposed PD workshops and trainers to ensure that they meet the needs of our teachers and students. The committee also reviews and provides input regarding proposed PD workshops and policy changes.

To back the focus of IET expansion statewide, the MPWS offered professional development and technical assistance in developing Single Sets of Learning Objectives (SSLO) for AEL workplace education and occupational training services. Using the IET Design Camp resources as a foundation, AEL staff walked program staff through the importance of SSLOs and used real-life examples to demonstrate. By working with other team members to develop IET learning objectives based on occupationally relevant materials, local programs can integrate the practice of SSLOs in all AEL classrooms, providing workforce readiness to adult students statewide.

Based on feedback and assessment data, AEL identified the need for additional assessment training for English learners. Using the expertise of experienced adult educators, the MPWS revamped its process for AEL proctor certification to simplify and accommodate the changing needs of local service providers. This allows for stability in assessment data statewide and agility upon the need to transition assessment tools.

Provision of technical assistance to funded eligible providers as described in section 223 (1)(c).

The MPWS provides immediate one-on-one technical assistance to AEL programs facing challenges based on data reviews, conversations, and staff turnover. Multiple former local program administrators are contracted to assist programs in real-time throughout the state, and the AEL state staff serve as on-site guidance when appropriate. The fulfillment of technical assistance can be formal and triggered by monitoring or risk assessment. In many cases, it is informal and based on a question or a discussion.

The MPWS hosts a bi-monthly virtual seminar for AEL administrators, the DESE Download, to disseminate guidance and policy updates to all programs. These sessions support navigating the changing environment and ensure consistent communication within Missouri's AEL community. Topics include LACES data system guidance, statewide performance data reviews, providing accommodations for students with disabilities, trauma-informed classrooms, and assistance with follow-up outcome surveys. The MPWS also spotlights program directors and successes at each local program and answers direct questions from program directors.

The MPWS provides additional technical assistance and one-on-one training to support the development of IETs with quality skills and credential attainment. Further updates to the data system and its reporting functions allow DESE to share real-time performance comparisons with all service providers throughout the program year and react to trends immediately. The MPWS provides targeted guidance and tools for follow-up outcomes and incentivizes programs to obtain this data.

The MPWS sponsors in-person mentorships provided by experienced local program directors to assist with transitions of new program leadership. This practice allows the transfer of knowledge and utilizes the expertise of front-line leadership to address pressing needs. AEL providers see evidence of shared best practices and strengthened relationships by using visiting directors.

Missouri also supports the ongoing mentorship of its local program directors and instructors to ensure continuity and quality in service delivery. In addition to mentorship, the MPWS hosts virtual and in-person training sessions for regional program directors who have held their positions for fewer than three years. Sessions discuss WIOA, performance outcomes, the LACES data system, Missouri AEL policies, and financial procedures.

Monitoring and evaluating the quality and improvement of adult education activities as described in section 223(1)(d).

The MPWS divides local AEL service providers into three cohorts to distribute on-site monitoring over the three-year grant cycle. Using a risk assessment, state AEL staff determine which programs receive on-site reviews and analyze data identifying specific classrooms for observation based on performance, attendance, and testing. When facing travel concerns, the state monitoring team developed procedures for virtual monitoring. This protocol includes secure file transfers, virtual monitoring of classrooms, and virtual interviews with students and instructors. Even though travel concerns are lifted, maintaining these protocols preserves resources for other uses. Programs in the scheduled cohort not completing a virtual on-site review complete a self-assessment, which DESE AEL staff review and discuss with local programs.

Once the AEL review team collects all necessary information, they examine Self-Assessments or On-Site reviews and supporting documentation. During team meetings, administrators use this opportunity to capitalize on areas of strength within each program and offer suggestions on areas of weakness and risk. The review team identifies two types of risk through a report for each local program after the review. “Areas of Concern” are typically issues that involve non-compliance with requirements in the grant or a state policy, fiscal/accounting concerns, or performance results below state standards and require a plan of action. “Additional Information” is for clarification purposes. Some programs must submit a written response and complete a corrective action plan.

AEL State Leadership Funds assist local service providers in achieving and measuring negotiated performance levels. Investments in student assessment include unlimited access to virtual testing for all programs and improved professional development aligned with performance data. In addition, the MPWS determines policy and procedure updates utilizing performance outcomes including data quality, serving individuals with disabilities, record retention, and assessment requirements.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

The MPWS recognizes investing AEL State Leadership Funds in distance learning statewide is essential. The MOlearns program has been a valuable instructional option for Missouri adult learners, available to students who cannot attend a traditional class or as supplemental instruction for hybrid students. With the availability of online assessment products, the MPWS now supports MOlearns in providing AEL student assessments, allowing tests to inform online instruction. The demand for MOlearns now supports its integration into local program services throughout the MPWS.

The MPWS continues to discover customizations in the statewide AEL data management system that assist local programs in recording Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) through IETs and workplace literacy. The MPWS must approve all IET programming before a program can record performance outcomes, and AEL staff have provided detailed guidance and technical assistance on options for IET MSGs. Tailored reports and professional development give administrators and educators the tools they need to support the retention and success of students in all AEL classrooms. The MPWS recruited IET subject matter experts and deployed them to service providers developing new career pathway programming. This allowed for extended outreach and technical support to create opportunities for Missouri students. Through partnerships such as MAWD and ALN, the MPWS utilizes Leadership funds to develop workplace literacy partnerships with major manufacturers in various regions of the state.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under Title II. Describe how the eligible agency will take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA. Describe how the eligible agency will use evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.

The MPWS emphasizes program improvement, and AEL staff evaluate real-time data every month. State staff utilize data to develop strategies that will help improve local program performance outcomes and deliver ongoing technical assistance to programs regarding academic gain, the number of students served, and the cost per student. Local AEL providers must instruct a proportionate number of students related to the funds spent. Throughout the year, there are communications between the MPWS and the local AEL programs regarding data quality, program effectiveness, and performance based on data reviews.

The MPWS identified methods to improve the reporting of AEL student follow-up outcomes through surveys. State staff offered technical assistance in survey completion and revealed to service providers the positive impact follow-up outcomes have on performance reporting and strategic planning. The MPWS provided survey scripts in multiple languages, updated its AEL survey collection tool with data validation features, and utilized state staff to distribute contact information of students ready for surveys. This allows the MPWS and local AEL providers to improve offerings for post-secondary attainment and employment supports based on a more accurate picture of student outcomes.

Missouri customized reports in the AEL student data system that provide extensive at-a-glance data for local programs. Using these reports, the MPWS hosts one-on-one meetings with local service providers to discuss trends. Programs receive feedback on enrollment, post-testing rates, student persistence, and skill gains. Those providers attaining targets are eligible for the annual AEL High-Quality Award. All of these procedures contributed to the MPWS surpassing its negotiated 62% AEL MSG rate by achieving 66.7% in 2024 and 64.4% in 2025.

The MPWS regularly shares demographic and outcome data with local AEL service providers and provides targeted professional development to create data literacy among program staff. Utilizing

personalized data review sessions, the MPWS made considerable strides toward restoring AEL enrollment numbers to pre-pandemic levels. Total enrollment of adult students is up 29% since 2022 and 57% since 2021. The MPWS evaluated trends in enrollment and persistence of adult students and adjusted delivery models to attract missing populations, especially those looking for distance education options. A focus on professional development for English acquisition educators allowed agility among AEL service providers to cater to a 144% increase in adult English language students in the MPWS since 2020. Focusing on the current trends in enrollment and student success allows the MPWS to translate data analysis to service delivery amongst its provider system through professional development and technical assistance.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to wioa@ed.gov at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	Enter information in this column
Applicant's Organization	Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education AEL
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	Enter information in this column
First Name	Megan
Last Name	Wadley
Title	Coordinator, AEL and HSE
Email	megan.wadley@dese.mo.gov

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) ([20 U.S.C. 1228a](#)) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status,

homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.
- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.
- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

GEPA Section 427 Instructions to State Applicants for their Subrecipient Applicants

The State grantee provides a subrecipient applicant seeking Federal assistance instructions and guidance for how it must comply with the GEPA Section 427 requirement. The State grantee determines the form and content of the information a subrecipient applicant must include in its application regarding the steps it proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, its local-level project or activity. For example:

- The State grantee may require its subrecipient applicant to use and submit the GEPA Section 427 form that it is required to submit to the Department; or
- The State grantee may use a State-developed form that is sufficient to meet the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- The State grantee maintains the subrecipient applicants' responses in the State office.

Please refer to [GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package](#)

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

[GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package](#)

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

In carrying out its educational mission, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to and participation in its programs for students, school and district staff, agency employees, and others. Federally funded activities, programs and services are accessible to all teachers, students, and other program beneficiaries with special needs, allowing them to participate fully in the projects. It is the policy of DESE not to discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute in its programs or employment practices as required by Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act (GINA), or USDA Title VI.

Direct inquiries related to department employment practices to the Jefferson State Office Building, Human Resources Director, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-0480; telephone number 573-751-9619. Inquiries related to department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Director of Civil Rights Compliance, and MOA Coordinator (Title VI/Title VII/Title IX/504/ADA/ADAAA/Age Act/GINA/USDA Title VI), 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; fax number 573-522-4883; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

[GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package](#)

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

The nature of WIOA Title II services demands program delivery to individuals with barriers, including low literacy, low income, disabilities, lack of English proficiency, and justice involvement. DESE and its AEL providers help identify and mitigate barriers, including the examples listed.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) ([20 U.S.C. 1228a](#)) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

[GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package](#)

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

- Providers make all reasonable accommodations as requested for students and staff with disabilities; this includes building access, environment, learning tools, and processes. DESE supports providers in this effort with resources, guidance, and funding.
- Registration, orientation, and classes are open to the public and advertised in easy-to-find media sources.
- Students with specific barriers can contact the program for solutions and referrals to address any barriers to participation. Referrals lead to supportive services, disability services, cultural awareness, and other opportunities.
- Providers and DESE advertise staff positions in a mixture of media formats.
- Staff are chosen and interviewed in accordance with all applicable labor laws and using the outlines of the job description.

- Providers and DESE deliver needed accommodations, including schedule, space, and teaching tools.
- DESE requires providers to employ a student advocate who works with any students and staff who may have barriers that make their journey into and through adult education challenging.
- DESE and its AEL providers mitigate and eliminate barriers as they occur for students and staff regardless of race, national origin, color, age, disability, or gender.
- Program information and DESE guidance are available in languages other than English and alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language).

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) ([20 U.S.C. 1228a](#)) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

[GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package](#)

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Annually, DESE AEL compares enrollment and performance data with applicable census and labor market data. Needs identified by outside data sources are compared to AEL student enrollment demographics and performance outcomes for recognized populations. Barriers considered include race/ethnicity, beginning literacy level, disabilities, justice involvement, low income, and age, among others. If the review reveals significant gaps in service provision or student outcomes based on identified populations, DESE AEL immediately responds and expects measurable improvement by the following annual review.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION State Plan Modifications

Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

a. State Rehabilitation Council.

1. All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has:

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

2. In accordance with Assurance (a)(1)(B), if selected, please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	Awaiting	Appointment
Parent Training and Information Center	2nd term	03/23
Client Assistance Program	Awaiting	Appointment
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1 st term	12/24
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	Awaiting	Appointment
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	Awaiting	Appointment
Business, Industry, and Labor	Awaiting	Appointment
Business, Industry, and Labor	2nd term	03/23
Business, Industry, and Labor	2nd term	12/24
Business, Industry, and Labor	2nd term	12/24

Disability Advocacy Groups	1 st term	12/24
Disability Advocacy Groups	1 st term	12/24
Disability Advocacy Groups	Awaiting	Appointment
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	1 st term	12/24
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	1 st term	12/24
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	NA	NA
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	1 st term	12/24
State Workforce Development Board	1 st term	11/23
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	1 st term	12/24

3. If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in Section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in Section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) works with the governor's Missouri Boards and Commissions Office on a regular basis. This office is responsible for appointments to the SRC. MVR has been working with the boards and commissions office to meet the federally required Council composition.

The deputy commissioner of Learning Services for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, MVR's designated state agency, has spoken to the governor's office on the Council's behalf. With this assistance, seven appointments and two reappointments were secured in December 2024. These appointments along with current members brings the total to 13.

Missouri elected Governor Mike Kehoe in fall 2024. MVR's assistant commissioner and SRC liaison has met with the new boards and commissions director to review Section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR § 361.17(b) and RSA-TACs 12-01 and 23-02 to explain the SRC's role in ensuring Missourians with disabilities receive quality services. MVR has provided composition

requirements and expressed the importance of maintaining a complete, current, and functioning Council.

Five additional applications have been filed with the Boards and Commissions Office and are awaiting review and appointment. During a meeting with the boards and commissions director, MVR learned the governor's office is focusing on Senate confirmed appointments during the legislative session. Appointments, not requiring Senate approval, will be determined at a later date. MVR will stay abreast of the upcoming appointment reviews.

MVR values its relationship with the Boards and Commissions Office and continues to provide information on required Council representation as required in Section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. It has requested additional meetings with the Boards and Commissions Office to reiterate that Council input and recommendations are critical to the development and implementation of the state plan. MVR will stress the importance of the Council's role in the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. It will emphasize to the governor's office the significance of maintaining a fully constituted SRC.

4. In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) reviewed the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation's (MVR) services portion of the Combined State Plan for the Title I and VI B programs. On behalf of the Council, Bob Hosutt, SRC chairperson, submitted the following comments and suggestions:

1. The SRC Planning Committee, acting by proxy for the Council, had an opportunity to review and comment on MVR's services portion of the Combined State Plan. We are in support of your plan.
2. We approve of MVR's commitment to cooperating, collaborating, and coordinating with other components of the statewide workforce development system. Improving partnerships and supporting individuals, including youth and students, with disabilities to obtain competitive integrated employment benefits everyone.
3. We support MVR's goals and priorities of implementing progressive employment statewide, reducing the number of individuals exiting the program after a plan without securing employment, and increasing the number of individuals eligible to obtain a measurable skill gain. The SRC recommends that MVR work on strategies to assist them in reaching its goals and priorities and provide updates on its performance at future Council meetings.
4. The SRC does recognize that rising costs and limited funding may necessitate the closing of categories and the institution of a moving waiting list for services. The Council believes that any waiting list is undesirable and will result in more individuals becoming dependent on public assistance and increase the number of individuals who drop from the program before services are provided. The SRC will work with MVR on strategies to keep the waiting list open and will ask for updates at the Council meetings.

5. The SRC would like to acknowledge MVR's work on the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. We agree with the expected levels of performance MVR submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and expect the final negotiated rates will be achieved in the upcoming years.

6. The SRC shares with MVR a concern that accessing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities can be challenging. The Council continues to support MVR's efforts to find solutions by encouraging innovation and job creation and focusing on high quality employment outcomes. MVR is expanding opportunities for employment outcomes through its pilot programs on customized employment and peer mentoring for youth and students with disabilities.

7. The SRC reviewed the draft of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council's 2025 annual report and offered full support of the program's performance, data, and services. The client success stories are powerful statements of the program's impact. We are impressed with the consumer satisfaction feedback summarized in the report indicating positive statewide results. We are pleased that the feedback is shared with staff as a resource and utilized for service and process improvement.

8. The Council appreciates the work and inspiration that went into developing priorities for the upcoming program year. During our quarterly meetings, we had the opportunity to work with MVR in setting priorities in addition to the program's goals and strategies. We are excited to see that MVR is not just developing a "priorities" document but is actualizing the priorities through its service delivery. From MVR's staff presentations at our quarterly meetings, we are informed of the program's progress. We recognize MVR's commitment to its culture of support, encouragement, and caring.

9. The SRC had opportunities in the past year to provide input on other important matters with your agency. The Council provided recommendations on and approval of policy revisions and proposed administrative rule changes. It collaborated with other disability-related councils and participated in and reviewed feedback from the public hearings. We will continue to review hearing decisions and assess the need for hearing officer positions during our meetings.

The SRC appreciates the opportunity to work with MVR on these matters of importance to individuals with disabilities in the state of Missouri.

5. Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.

Response to SRC recommendation 1: MVR is pleased that the SRC is in support of MVR's services portion of the Combined State Plan.

Response to SRC recommendation 2: MVR is pleased that the SRC recognizes our commitment to supporting WIOA initiatives and our desire to work with other components of the statewide workforce development system in improving competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals, including youth and students, with disabilities.

Response to SRC recommendation 3: MVR appreciates the SRC's support of the program's goals and priorities. MVR agrees to comply with the SRC's recommendations to work on the goals and priorities and update the SRC at quarterly meetings about its performance.

Response to SRC recommendation 4: MVR agrees with the SRC that waiting lists are undesirable and have many negative effects on individuals with disabilities. It will continue to implement cost effective practices so that more individuals can receive services. MVR looks forward to working with the SRC on strategies to keep the waiting list open and will provide updates at each Council meeting.

Response to SRC recommendations 5: MVR will work on negotiating the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. We appreciate your support of the expected levels of performance submitted to Rehabilitation Services Administration. We will provide updates on MVR's performance measures during upcoming Council meetings.

Response to SRC recommendations 6: MVR will continue to work on increasing quality employment outcomes. We will continue developing and maintaining strong partnerships to provide effective employment services. Our collaboration with other WIOA core and combined partners, as well as federal and local agencies, align our efforts in delivering services in an effective and efficient manner.

Response to SRC recommendation 7: MVR appreciates the SRC's feedback on and approval of the annual report. We are proud of the positive consumer satisfaction results and will continue sharing the feedback with staff and utilizing it to improve service delivery.

Response to SRC recommendation 8: MVR appreciates the Council's involvement in developing priorities for the upcoming program year in addition to our goals and strategies. We will present the program's progress during upcoming meetings. We are proud of the culture that we have established with support from the Council.

Response to SRC recommendation 9: MVR values and agrees with SRC's recommendations on proposed administrative rule and policy changes. Public hearing feedback was shared with the Council, and MVR appreciates the SRC's interest in the hearings and comments received. MVR will continue to present information on hearing decisions and work with the Council on assessing the need for hearing officer positions.

MVR expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation for the excellent assistance from the SRC this year. The SRC has been extremely active and helpful with reviewing, analyzing, and advising MVR on its performance. MVR looks forward to working with the SRC in the future to continue serving individuals with disabilities.

MVR did not reject any of the Council's input or recommendations.

b. Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA).

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:

MVR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) jointly conduct the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) of the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities over a three-year period. The last assessment was completed in 2021 and covered PY 2018 through PY 2020. MVR contracted with the Institute of Public Policy through the University of Missouri (MU-IPP) in 2023 to conduct a needs assessment, which was completed in August 2024. The findings of this assessment contributed to MVR's CSNA covering PY 2021 through PY 2023.

MVR submits the results of the needs assessment to the Rehabilitation Services Administration during the four-year combined state plan cycle, two-year modification cycle or anytime circumstances require a modification in accordance with 20 CFR § 676.145. This section pertains to the statewide assessment period completed in 2024 and illustrates areas of need. The conclusions and recommendations of these assessments are incorporated into MVR's goals and priorities for the purpose of improving services to individuals with disabilities.

MVR uses a mixed methods approach to collect, in aggregate, qualitative and quantitative information on the rehabilitation needs of Missouri individuals with disabilities. Information resources include:

a. Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

MVR routinely surveys a random sample of clients throughout various stages of open cases and case closures to obtain feedback on MVR services and to determine how to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities.

b. Public Hearings

Annually, MVR conducts statewide public hearings to obtain input on the state plan, its key goals and priorities, plan changes and any other topic related to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

c. Input from the State Rehabilitation Council

During quarterly and ad hoc committee meetings, the SRC provides input to MVR on the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities.

d. Teams

MVR utilizes both ad hoc and on-going teams, such as the CRP-MVR Teams and the Youth Services Team, to gather data from its partners and school districts.

e. Analysis of Performance Measures and Program Data

On a quarterly basis, MVR management reviews data to ensure the program is meeting its goals. The SRC annually reviews and analyzes this information with MVR and receives quarterly program updates.

f. MVR uses an online questionnaire to survey staff.

g. Annually, MVR leadership visits VR district offices to gather input on the needs of clients and individuals with disabilities.

Additional resources include:

- quality assurance case and fiscal reviews
- quarterly reviews of case management data
- data from the American Community Survey and U.S. Census Bureau
- data from the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium
- data from other state and federal agencies
- data from state and community boards and commissions
- information obtained during WIOA partner team meetings
- due process hearings and mediations
- literature reviews

As previously mentioned, MVR contracted with MU-IPP to complete a CSNA. The results of this CSNA contribute to the assessment of need that MVR conducts throughout the three-year cycle. The MU-IPP assessment utilized a qualitative methodology that included online surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews with stakeholders.

Surveys were conducted with clients, Centers for Independence, the Governor's Council on Disability, community rehabilitation provider (CRP) employees, University of Missouri Pre-Employment Transition Service (pre-ETS) staff, and employers. Focus groups were held with high school staff, MVR employees, and clients. Key informant interviews were conducted with CRP directors and pre-ETS staff.

The CSNA identified strengths of the MVR program. It was noted that job coaching was seen as a positive service; one that can help an individual with a disability learn and keep a job for an extended period. Job exploration and work experience opportunities are a valuable resource for MVR clients both adults and students with disabilities. The MVR Summer Work Experience for students has proven beneficial in helping participants discover the types of work they are interested in and how to best use their personal strengths. The assessment revealed additional MVR program strengths that include job shadowing, trainings, and simulated work experiences, all which are helpful to students and youth with disabilities.

MVR counselor and client relationships were described as positive; thereby, creating a better service for individuals with disabilities. Employer feedback indicated productive relationships exist between MVR, clients, and themselves with MVR providing regular support. Employers did not report any challenges when working with MVR.

The assessment identified several barriers in receiving services. Lack of transportation were among general concerns. This is a common issue for many agencies and organizations especially in rural areas. MVR continually reviews this issue for possible resolutions. Offices work with local transportation providers such as OATS and Centers for Independent Living. MVR offers virtual services. Counselors meet clients where they are such as job centers, libraries, and schools. Housing

and affordable childcare were also noted barriers. MVR refers individuals to other resources in the community and to workforce system partners.

Staff turnover was presented as a concern. Counselors leaving employment limits continuity of services. MVR is addressing this issue with the hiring of an HR recruiter to help with recruitment and retention operations. One of MVR's strategic priorities is to "recruit, cultivate, and retain talent while planning for succession."

Research conducted during the CSNA indicated that lack of community support for individuals with disabilities is a barrier in obtaining employment. There is a common misperception that individuals with disabilities are incapable of performing jobs even if those individuals can do the job with MVR support. There is a lack of accommodating work environments for individuals with disabilities.

The lack of awareness of MVR services was cited. General feedback indicated that improved communication within the community was necessary to reduce barriers to service. Related to this issue was communication with employers. While overall, employers felt supported by MVR, other employers desired more support for employees in a timely fashion.

One of MVR's strategies is to strengthen relationships with employers across the state. Strategies employed to reach this goal include utilizing the Talent Acquisition Portal and expanding Nexus groups. Nexus groups are employment collaboratives that include MVR, WIOA partner agencies, and employers. The groups focus on connecting candidates with barriers to employment to business partners through meetings, planned events, and panel discussions. MVR's strategic priorities include promoting "VR as a high value community resource," which includes communication with employers. MVR's Business Services Specialists work with employers to find suitable candidates for their businesses. They also work with employers to dispel myths, explain MVR supports, and offer guidance among other services. Missouri is an Employment First State. As a part of the Employment First policy, MVR works with the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) and partner agencies in educating Missouri communities, which includes employers, on the importance of competitive, integrated employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Also taken into consideration during the CSNA was a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis completed by MVR's Executive Leadership Team. The SWOT analysis revealed MVR's strengths lie in its focus on long-term individualized outcomes designed to maximize potential. MVR provides a supportive work environment with dedicated employees. The agency strives to be the go-to organization in Missouri for disability employment expertise. Areas of weakness are related to the lack of awareness of the MVR program and recruitment and retention of staff. These were already addressed above.

The following is a summary of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment results in response to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Missouri, particularly the vocational rehabilitation service needs of:

A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;

According to the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates, Missouri's population exceeds 6.1 million. Of that number, 886,543 Missourians report some type of disability. The rate of disability in the state is 15 percent.

MVR projects that the number of eligible individuals with most significant disabilities that will receive services will be 14,745. Of that estimate, 7,514 individuals will need supported employment (SE) services.

The CSNA identified that individuals with the most significant disabilities require specialized services to meet their key needs, which include their need for SE.

The nature of SE services requires an individualized approach based on the needs of an eligible individual. SE services provide ongoing support for individuals with a most significant disability to assist them in achieving and maintaining competitive integrated employment. SE services include customized employment and Individualized Placement Services (IPS). IPS is an evidence-based supported employment service for adults with mental illness. Services are provided by CRPs. MVR can provide up to 24 months of community-based job training.

An MVR objective is to maintain high quality supported employment services. One strategy is the practice of partnering. MVR partners with two divisions of DMH to provide IPS and customized employment. Through these partnerships, MVR identifies and shares best case practices.

MVR contracted with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a plan for implementing customized employment services across Missouri.

To increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities, MVR leverages other public and private funds through its continued work with DMH's Developmental Disability (DD) division in utilizing home and community-based waivers. It will continue to work closely with the Missouri Department of Social Services MO HealthNet Division to ensure that youth with the most significant disabilities are receiving extended services.

From the CSNA, job coaching was noted to be tremendously helpful for individuals with significant disabilities. SE on-the-job support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, are provided with SE grant dollars only after job placement. MVR routinely expends its SE grant allotment after which Title I funds are utilized.

In addition to SE, other services may include:

- discovery and exploration;
- provision of long-term, extended services support with the client or employer a minimum of twice per month; and
- customized employment for individuals and employers.

B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

The 2023 ACS five-year estimates report that the African American population in Missouri is 11% with 15% reporting some type of disability. On average from PY 2021 to 2023, 19% of MVR's total service population was African American. MVR's service rate for African American clients is greater than the rate of African American Missourians reporting a disability. The data supports that MVR is generally meeting the needs of this population.

The needs assessment identified the minority population of Hispanics as an underserved population. The 2023 ACS five-year estimates report that Missouri's Hispanic population is 5% with 8% reporting some type of disability. On average from PY 2021 to 2023, 3% of MVR's total service population was Hispanic. MVR's service rate for Hispanic clients is lower than the rate of Hispanic Missourians reporting a disability.

The 2023 ACS five-year estimates report the Asian population in Missouri is relatively low at 2% with 6% of this population reporting some type of disability. On average from PY 2021 to 2023, 1% of MVR's total service population was Asian. MVR's service rate for Asian clients is lower than the rate of Asian Missourians reporting a disability.

The 2023 ACS five-year estimates report the Missouri populations of American Indians/Alaska Natives is very low at less than 1%. This population is reporting a high percentage rate of some type of disability at 23%. On average from PY 2021 to 2023, 2% of MVR's total service population was American Indian/Alaska Native. MVR's service rate for these populations is lower than the rate of American Indian/Alaska Native Missourians reporting a disability.

The 2023 ACS five-year estimates report the Missouri populations of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders is very low at less than 1%. This population is reporting a percentage rate of some type of disability at 12%. On average from PY 2021 to 2023, less than 1% of MVR's total service population was Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. MVR's service rate for this population is lower than the rate of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Missourians reporting a disability.

Some feedback obtained during the CSNA described individuals with mental health disabilities as an underserved population. However, agency data reflects that individuals with mental health impairments are one of MVR's largest categories of disability served at an average of 42% from PY 2021 to 2023.

MVR considers this population in its goals and priorities and has taken active measures to address individuals with mental health disabilities. DMH-Division of Behavioral Health (BH) and DD are longstanding partners with MVR in assisting eligible individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services to gain employment. Partnership activities include the funding of DB101, a customized Missouri benefits-planning website. Cross-system collaboration remains ongoing through system change initiatives, grant and technical support opportunities, and local/regional trainings. MVR has appointed a DMH liaison, and DMH has representation on WIOA teams consisting of combined partner programs and other partner agencies.

As mentioned before, MVR partners with DMH-BH and DD to provide IPS and customized employment. IPS requires close program and clinical relationships between local mental health and MVR staff to ensure success. Through these partnerships, MVR identifies and shares best case practices. A target, within MVR's goals and priorities, is to increase or maintain the number of agreements with Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers providing IPS services.

Several respondents during the CSNA expressed concern that low-income individuals and homeless individuals were underserved. Though MVR does not have data to support this feedback, the agency considers this valuable information and will further investigate these concerns.

C. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system:

- job search assistance
- labor market information
- resume assistance
- case management
- assessment
- individual planning and referral
- educational attainment
- work experiences
- apprenticeships
- customized employment
- support services such as uniforms, steel toed boots, equipment, etc.
- skills development and training
- computer skills training
- transportation assistance
- rehabilitation technology
- hiring and recruiting events

Individuals with disabilities expressed the need for a seamless workforce system. A system that allows for coordination, collaboration, and cooperation across agencies. They do not wish the inconvenience of navigating multiple entry points to obtain services. Through Missouri's Public Workforce System (MPWS), the identified services above can be provided through co-locations among other service delivery avenues. MVR has several offices co-located in Missouri Job Centers.

MVR has initiated partnering meetings between its staff and staff from MPWS for the purpose of identifying and sharing available services ensuring needs of individuals with disabilities are addressed. The WIOA Steering Committee, comprised of members of core and combined partners, meets regularly as implementers of MPWS services. This team assesses and analyzes the effectiveness of service delivery, including performance of the core partners' accountability measures.

When individuals with disabilities apply for vocational rehabilitation services and are not financially eligible, MVR refers them to other components of the MPWS. Individuals providing the services are representatives from the Office of Workforce Development, Missouri Job Centers, and other WIOA program partners.

D. Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.

In assessing the needs of youth and students with disabilities, research from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition documents unsatisfactory outcomes achieved by youth with disabilities exiting school. They have difficulty accessing employment, education, and community services. There is a need to bridge the information gap between schools, rehabilitation services, community agencies, and employers.

Based on the most recent core data from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary (DESE) Office of Special Education, for school year 2023-2024, the number of students with individualized education plans (IEPs), age 14 to 21 and currently enrolled in school, is 39,742. This number represents students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS) or other transition services. MVR further disaggregated this data by MVR district office so that school districts were grouped together based on the MVR office that serves each school. Therefore, the local MVR office knows the specific number of students with IEPs for each of the schools that they serve.

MVR has received feedback from many stakeholders such as consumers, parents, school districts, and employers regarding the need for services for youth and students with disabilities. There are limited competitive integrated employment opportunities for this population especially in rural areas. There is a consensus that an increase in work experiences is necessary.

MVR is answering these pre-employment transition needs of eligible or potentially eligible students with multiple strategies that supplement the MVR transition services that have traditionally been provided by its staff and partners. These strategies include summer work experience programs coordinated with CRPs and similar programs with CILs. The VR Summer Work Experience was developed in partnership with CRPs. MVR offers paid summer work experience opportunities in integrated settings for potentially eligible or VR-eligible students with disabilities. The CIL Summer Pre-Employment Transition Services Program provides potentially eligible or VR-eligible students with disabilities access to job exploration activities, workplace readiness training, social support, and instruction on self-advocacy including peer mentoring. MVR collaborated with businesses and school districts to provide services through these programs.

MVR is contracting with the University of Missouri (MU), College of Education and Human Development, to assist with the provision of pre-ETS through regional pre-employment specialists. The university hired 66 pre-ETS specialists, all certified educational professionals, to work in collaboration with local education agencies (LEAs) and MVR to provide statewide pre-ETS to

students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services. Twelve of the 66 provide pre-ETS in the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled.

There was some indication during the CSNA that better coordination between MVR, CRPs, and pre-ETS specialists was a concern. MVR continues to work closely with CRPs and the MU pre-ETS specialists. As mentioned above, MVR works in partnership with CRPs on the VR Summer Work Experience program. Pre-ETS staff participate in monthly regional team meetings and in-person professional development “Boot Camps” biannually. These training sessions provide staff with updates on program policies, evidence-based strategies for supporting students with disabilities, and insights from key partners such as MVR. Interactive formats are used to promote the effective integration of this information into the specialists’ instructional practices.

MVR is working on a pilot program designed to provide peer mentoring for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems and homeless or housing insecure youth. MVR is working with local juvenile justice centers, the family court system, and the Missouri Department of Social Services Children’s Division to provide services for this underserved population. Through these programs, MVR is partnering with CILs, the University of Missouri’s College of Education and Human Development, Missouri State University, the Office of Workforce Development, and an employer mentor.

MVR funds deaf/hard of hearing students to attend the Rochester Institute of Technology and Camp Launch at Southern Illinois-Edwardsville for a pre-employment transition services camp. MVR is also working with Wonderland Camp, of Rocky Mount, on an internship program for both students and youth with disabilities. MVR sponsors students and youth with disabilities to participate in the Governor’s Council on Disability Missouri Youth Leadership Forum that focuses on leadership, citizenship, and social and career development skills. MVR is utilizing its business services specialists to work with employers on creating work experiences for youth and students with disabilities. It is also collaborating with its WIOA partners in providing seamless, coordinated services to youth and students with disabilities.

Research verifies that pathways from school to work or secondary to postsecondary education can be more difficult for individuals with disabilities; therefore, the need for transition career services and pre-employment transition services is great.

DESE reports that for 2023-2024 school year, the percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school, and who have been:

- enrolled in higher education is 26.4%
- enrolled in higher education or competitively employed is 71.9%

DESE defines competitively employed as employed 20 hours a week for at least 90 days. There is ongoing need for VR to work with the LEAs.

MVR surveyed statewide staff to gather information on practices and services for youth with disabilities. Among the findings, staff reported that some of the barriers that youth with disabilities face in obtaining successful employment are a lack of work exposure or work experiences, transportation issues, the absence of parent/family involvement or follow through from parents

and students. Feedback indicated that the number of vocational rehabilitation staff was not adequate to serve the number of students.

Feedback has shown that not all school districts are open to enhancing transition services. MVR is utilizing its transition counselors to forge inroads with school districts statewide. It is also working with the University of Missouri's College of Education and Human Development, through pre-ETS, to access all school districts including ones that historically have been hesitant in enhancing transition services. Additional strategies include an MVR-developed Youth Services video, which can be shared with parents and students before, during, or after IEP meetings. MVR counselors are present at IEP meetings when invited, using conference calls and video conferencing, when necessary, to coordinate services that are a part of the MVR individualized plan for employment (IPE). The Youth Services team provides training during new counselor training that is specific to pre-ETS and VR transition services.

The DESE Graduation Handbook and DESE Transition Agreement include three work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities on an IEP and are coordinated with special education. Students receive high school credit. These three experiences are the COOP Program, employer-based transition training/Project Search for students with most significant disabilities, and unpaid internships.

MVR is part of the St. Louis County Youth Interagency Partnership, comprised of any organization serving youth in St. Louis County, which was formed to coordinate services so that no youth fall through the cracks between agencies.

MVR, the Office of Special Education, school personnel, and CRP staff are involved in partnership activities, joint training, and technical assistance activities. Two Youth Services team members represent MVR on the State Transition Team. The Youth Services team has an active member on the state's Special Education Advisory Panel and the Missouri Parents Act's (MPACT) Board.

The Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT) was formed through the Office of Special Education and includes members representing state-level agencies, including MVR, across Missouri who have an interest in improving postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. MITT meets to collaborate, break down service barriers, share resources, improve overall systems of service, and improve data sharing among agencies.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

- a) Establish new CRPs: MVR does not believe that there is a need to establish new CRPs.
- b) Expand/develop current network of CRPs: MVR does not believe that there is a need to expand or develop the current network of CRPs.
- c) Improve CRPs: MVR has identified the following strategies to improve CRPs within the state:
 - The CRP-MVR steering committee will continue to make recommendations to improve services.

- Minimum training requirements for CRP staff members have been developed and incorporated into the CRP-MVR Agreement. The CRP-MVR Steering Committee will monitor implementation of these new requirements and make recommendations as necessary.
- Annually, MVR holds four in-person and one virtual CRP/MVR summits statewide. MVR staff and CRP direct services staff attend the meetings. The purpose of the summits is to enhance communication, promote partnering, share best practices, gather feedback and provide joint training.

c. Goals, Priorities, and Strategies

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1. Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and

MVR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) jointly developed and agreed upon the agency's goals and priorities for the upcoming program year while also taking into consideration any revisions for future goals and priorities.

2. Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in Section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—

A. Support innovation and expansion activities;

B. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;

C. Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post-secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and

D. Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority

MVR's goals and priorities are based on information from the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, the performance accountability measures, and other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program. MVR and the SRC developed strategies to achieve the goals and priorities.

(1) The Most Recent Comprehensive Statewide Assessment, Including any Updates

In developing its goals and priorities, MVR analyzed information and results obtained from the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). The assessment includes feedback from the SRC, public hearings, consumer satisfaction surveys, and information obtained from the Institute of Public Policy through the University of Missouri. This information is given to the administrative and strategic teams to develop strategies. MVR utilizes a variety of teams to assist with the development and implementation of many of the strategies identified in this section. Team members include MVR staff, management, providers, former consumers, and school personnel. MVR's Management Team monitors outcomes and progress toward goals on a regular basis. To illustrate MVR's use of the CSNA, one area revealed that there is a lack of awareness of MVR services within the community. Related to this issue is communication with employers and the need to strengthen relationships. This is especially important for employer engagement with respect to implementing customized employment statewide. MVR has made it a priority to improve customized employment opportunities as evidenced in the setting of goals, targets, and objectives in its current state plan.

(2) The State's Performance Under the Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA

MVR reviewed the requirements for the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA when goals, priorities, and strategies were in development. Available data and performance were taken into consideration. MVR utilized the performance indicators and its previous performance when setting its goals.

MVR's performance outcomes for PY 2023 and PY 2024 are listed below.

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit

PY 2023: 64.6% PY 2024: 62.9%

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit

PY 2023: 62.4% PY 2024: 60.5%

Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit

PY 2023: \$5,204 PY 2024: \$6,173

Credential Attainment Rate

PY 2023: 60.5% PY 2024: 58.0%

Measurable Skill Gains

PY 2023: 76.1% PY 2024: 71%

(3) Other Available Information on the Operation and Effectiveness of the VR Program, Including Any Reports Received from the State Rehabilitation Council and Findings and Recommendations from Monitoring Activities Conducted Under Section 107.

Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program utilized in the development of the goals and priorities are:

- SRC input and recommendations
- RSA monitoring feedback from previous Section 107 Monitoring Reviews
- other sources, e.g., CRPs' legislative input, consumer satisfaction surveys, input from the Client Assistance Program and public hearings

Goals, Priorities, and Strategies

The goals and priorities for the VR and Supported Employment programs are listed below. The strategies to achieve the goals and priorities are part of methods used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

VR Program

Goal 1: Implement progressive employment (PE) statewide.

Target: Increase PE service sites 1 site per program year over the next five years.

Baseline data: PY 2024: 7 sites

Objective: VR participants will have increased access to services designed to support their ability to obtain middle skill occupations and high wages.

Strategies:

1. Finalize PE policy that includes procedures, roles, and evaluation metrics.
2. Develop a process for establishing new services that align with Rehabilitation Services Administration's, Missouri Office of Administration's, and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's policies.
3. Update community rehabilitation provider (CRP) agreement and the Consumer Services Guide (CSG) policy.
4. Launch an initial PE training for all VR staff and integrate PE into the ongoing staff training plan.
5. The Progressive Employment Team will develop and manage a process to monitor program progress.

Goal 2: Reduce the number of individuals exiting after an IPE without an employment outcome.

Target: Reduce the number of individuals exiting after an IPE without an employment outcome by 1.5% per program year.

Baseline Data: PY 2023: 3,686 PY 2024: 4,474

Objectives: Increase engagement with clients to maximize competitive integrated employment outcomes.

Strategies:

1. Develop and implement a counselor training system that includes standardized curriculum, interactive learning, and practices that enhance client engagement to maximize employment outcomes.
2. Enhance the MVR performance management system and the quality service tool to provide feedback and expectations of counselors in maintaining engagement with clients.
3. Evaluate current policy and procedures make amendments, as needed, to enhance VR counselor engagement with clients.

Goal 3: Increase the number of individuals eligible to obtain a Measurable Skill Gain.

Target: Increase the number of clients participating in training services by 1.5% per program year.

Baseline: PY 2023: 4,360 PY 2024: 4,572

Objective: Maximize the potential of individuals MVR serves.

Strategies:

1. Emphasize career pathways ensuring integration in staff training.
2. Expand the Progressive Employment Program for training services in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Development and Career and Technical Education.
3. Simplify postsecondary training authorization process.
4. Evaluate current policy and procedures and make amendments, as needed, to enhance access to training opportunities.

MVR's goals, priorities, and strategies for the distribution of funds from section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services are:

Goal 1: Implement customized employment (CE) statewide.

Target: Increase CE service sites by 1 site per program year over the next five years.

Baseline data: PY 2024: 1 CE site

Objective: Maintain high quality supported employment services.

Strategies:

1. Finalize CE policy that includes procedures, roles, and evaluation metrics.
2. Update CRP agreement and the CSG policy.
3. Launch an initial CE training for all VR staff and integrate CE into the ongoing staff training plan.
4. CE team will develop and manage a process for monitoring program progress.
5. Promote VR as a high value community resource to employers.

Goal 2: Implement collaborative programs to promote braiding of services within the statewide workforce development system.

Target: Increase or maintain the number of agreements with Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers providing IPS services per program year.

Baseline data: PY 2023: 33 PY 2024: 34

Objective: Maintain high quality supported employment services.

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide and expand IPS services statewide in partnership with the Department of Mental Health-Behavioral Health Division.

2. MVR contracted with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a plan for implementing CE services across Missouri.

The above strategies will also support innovation and expansion activities, aid in overcoming barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services, improve and expand services for students with disabilities, and improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs.

(A) Support innovation and expansion activities;

MVR continues to support innovation and expansion activities through its commitment to supported employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Multiple ad hoc teams composed of MVR and CRP staff work together developing new ideas and designing processes to successfully support and implement those new ideas. A CRP-MVR team was created to assess service overlap between the Department of Mental Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) and CRPs. The team identified ways to braid services.

MVR is also supporting innovation and expansion activities through new pilots in several areas such as apprenticeships and peer mentoring for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems. Homeless and housing insecure youths are included in these programs. Through these pilots, MVR is collaborating with numerous partners such as the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, Centers for Independent Living, rehabilitation service providers, University of Missouri, Missouri State University, Office of Workforce Development, and employers. Braiding services through these collaborations opens opportunities to reach more Missourians with disabilities desiring to work.

MVR utilizes innovation and expansion funds to support activities of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council pursuant to 34 CFR section §361.35.

(B) Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;

MVR developed the strategies below to overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the VR and supported employment services programs.

To address barriers to services for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems, along with homeless and housing in-secure youths, MVR created a pilot project to provide peer mentoring.

MVR developed Employment Services Plus to assist individuals with autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury or deafness/hearing loss who require additional supports to reach successful outcomes.

MVR works with DMH-DD and community rehabilitation programs to provide a customized employment pilot program for individuals who have not been able to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment. Some of the individuals in the program have encountered barriers to traditional VR services. The pilot promotes the specific abilities of the individual and identifies effective strategies to meet employer needs. MVR contracted with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a plan for implementing customized employment services across Missouri.

(C) Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and

The methods to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life are included in MVR's goals, priorities and strategies. Goal 1 was developed to expand PE statewide. Upon graduating, students in career and technical education programs have the opportunity for paid work experiences, job development and placement, and retention services. PE is an interagency model that offers supports to both the participant and the employer. It utilizes labor market information to assure the vocational goal is in a stable and/or growing occupation, is above minimum wage, and has the potential for career pathways and credential attainment. With the objective of participants having increased access to services designed to support their ability to obtain middle skill occupations and high wages, the following strategies were developed:

1. Finalize PE policy that includes procedures, roles, and evaluation metrics.
2. Develop a process for establishing new services that align with Rehabilitation Services Administration's, Missouri Office of Administration's, and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's policies.
3. Update community rehabilitation provider (CRP) agreement and the Consumer Services Guide (CSG) policy.
4. Launch an initial PE training for all VR staff and integrate PE into the ongoing staff training plan.

5. The Progressive Employment Team will develop and manage a process to monitor program progress.

(D) Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

Below are additional methods and strategies to expand services and improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

Assistive Technology Services and Devices

The following strategies will be utilized to ensure a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis:

1. MVR will work jointly with CRPs and other partnering agencies, including WIOA partners, to develop and sponsor on-going training in rehabilitation technology services.
2. At any time during the rehabilitation process, MVR's statewide rehabilitation technology specialists will provide technical assistance to MVR counselors.
3. MVR has developed an ad hoc rehabilitation technology team to help clients meet their rehabilitation technology needs.
4. MVR staff will participate in activities, training programs and conferences sponsored by Missouri Assistive Technology.
5. MVR utilizes several rehabilitation technology projects, located at various Centers for Independent Living statewide, which have demonstration centers for exploring, reviewing and demonstrating various rehabilitation technology devices, services and resources.
6. MVR will continue to work with the rehabilitation technology needs of farm operators with disabilities and consult with staff statewide.
7. Biannually, MVR's vocational rehabilitation counselors for the deaf gather for training and to discuss new strategies, resources and issues for deaf and hard of hearing clients. MVR's assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing services plans and organizes the training.
8. MVR's assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing services will continue providing statewide support for staff with assistive technology services for clients with hearing impairments.

Outreach Strategies to Serve Individuals with Disabilities Who are Minorities, Most Significantly Disabled, and Unserved or Underserved

MVR developed the following outreach strategies:

1. MVR will continue recruiting rehabilitation counselors from diverse backgrounds to better serve individuals with significant disabilities.
2. MVR utilizes state-contracted interpreters to reduce communication barriers.

3. MVR translates brochures in seven different languages.

Improving Community Rehabilitation Programs

In order to achieve its goals and priorities, MVR developed strategies to improve community rehabilitation programs in Missouri. MVR will continue to provide training through annual CRP Summits. In addition, MVR and CRP staffs offer input on service delivery processes during partnering meetings and develop action plans to improve those processes. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to review progress on these processes, service delivery and to discuss current and future issues warranting attention. This effort, along with joint training activities, is beneficial to improving both the CRP and MVR programs.

Improving the State's Performance with Respect to the Performance Accountability Measures

MVR developed strategies to improve the agency's performance with regard to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. With staff input, MVR created Program Year Priorities to align with the performance accountability measures. The priorities focus on individuals with disabilities achieving long-term retention and higher wages by (1) establishing engagement with regular communication and mutual respect throughout each VR case, (2) ensuring all VR services are individualized, available, and documented accurately and timely, (3) utilizing a client-centered approach to vocational planning, (4) advocating for individualized accommodations in training and employment, (5) serving students with disabilities through pre-employment transition services, (6) engaging in continuous outreach efforts, and (7) creating employment opportunities through strong community partnerships and braiding services.

These priorities guided the development of the strategies listed below.

1. The MVR Business Team is strengthening relationships with employers across Missouri by

- connecting candidates to employers recruiting for apprenticeship opportunities;
- identifying and connecting with businesses offering career pathways paying above median wage;
- expanding Nexus groups across the state to strengthen WIOA partnerships and gain access to employers; and
- utilizing the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect candidates to employers.

2. Training Initiatives

MVR focuses training efforts on capturing the services it provides in its case management system for accurate reporting to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and to reflect staff's work to improve data entry performance.

3. Usage of Data

- MVR is utilizing a data interface for secondary education information to assist in capturing all education data.
- MVR is analyzing a data interface to capture postsecondary data.
- MVR's data interface with the state's Unemployment Insurance wage allows access to post wage data.

- MVR tailors its internal data management reports to generate information on its performance with regard to section 116 of WIOA.

4. Expanding work-based learning opportunities to include progressive employment.

MVR is expanding its work-based services to include the progressive employment model. This model provides participants paid work experiences in a supportive environment by offering supports to both the participant and the employer. It utilizes labor market information to assure the vocational goal is in a stable and/or growing occupation, is above minimum wage, and has the potential for career pathways and credential attainment. In addition to the paid work experience, this model continues to support the participant and help with job development, placement and retention services.

MVR is collaborating, cooperating and coordinating with WIOA partners to work on methods to align data systems, share referrals and determine common intake practices. It reviews the performance of the state with respect to the performance accountability measures with WIOA partners to ensure measures are consistent throughout the core programs. Efforts are directed at cross training to educate partner staff on each other's programs. MVR is analyzing methods to work with partners on braided services among programs.

Assisting Other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System

MVR created strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities. It continues to work with the Office of Workforce Development (OWD), which provides the statewide workforce development system services through the Missouri Job Centers in 13 workforce regions. MVR staff serves as active members on 9 local workforce development boards.

Through Memoranda of Understanding, MVR is an important referral source both from and to job center partners for individuals with disabilities. MVR counselors visit various Missouri Job Centers (both full-service sites and satellites) frequently to provide services to individuals in a timely fashion. MVR works with partners in learning what services are available and how to capitalize on resources and processes already in place. Some MVR staff members are co-located in the job centers.

MVR and OWB are members of the WIOA Steering Committee along with representatives from the WIOA core and combined partners. The committee joins the quarterly Missouri Statewide Partnership meetings. MVR is working closely with all WIOA partners in order to avoid duplication of services and provide the best services possible for consumers.

d. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

1. Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs; List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies

Strategies that contributed to the achievement of the PY 2024 Goals and Priorities established by MVR and the State Rehabilitation Council were as follows:

Goal 1: Increase the number of participants receiving training services.

Target: Increase the number of participants receiving training services by 2.5% per program year.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

The number of participants receiving training services during:

PY 2023: 3,398 PY 2024: 4,572

MVR will continue to work on the strategies below to increase the number of participants receiving training services.

Strategies:

1. Emphasize career pathways, ensuring integration in staff training.

MVR has incorporated numerous resources on career pathways into staff training. The training team has worked with other WIOA partners and training facilities to deliver current information and best-case practices for MVR staff to utilize. Monthly and year-end reports were created to reflect staff progress in this area.

2. Expand middle skills pilot program for training services in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Development and Career and Technical Education.

The middle skills pilot program began in 2021 and has grown from one to seven sites. Five participants completed the program this past year. Middle skills jobs require more education and training than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree.

3. Simplify postsecondary training authorization process.

MVR set an established rate of funding for training services. The institution of a statewide rate simplifies the postsecondary training authorization process and allows for the inclusion of more postsecondary institutions.

Goal 2: Increase the number of students with disabilities who access VR services.

Target: Increase the number of students with disabilities accessing VR services by 1.5% per program year.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

The number of students with disabilities who access VR services during:

PY 2023: 22,760 PY 2024: 25,808

Strategies:

1. Increase the number of high schools that VR and its providers engage.

MVR has a VR counselor assigned to each of the 554 public school districts in Missouri. MVR contracts with the University of Missouri to provide pre-employment transition services to potentially eligible students with disabilities. This arrangement has increased MVR's presence in the secondary school system. MVR's Summer Work Experience is a paid, six-week, 20-hours-per-week work-based learning experience with supports in a competitive, integrated setting for students with disabilities. The program is a collaboration between MVR, high schools, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), and employers. Through this program, MVR and its providers have increased their engagement with high schools.

2. Expand pre-employment transition services to justice and foster care involved and homeless or housing insecure students with disabilities in pilot locations.

MVR is piloting a peer mentoring program to serve students with disabilities in foster care and in the justice system around the state. Homeless or housing insecure youth with disabilities are also served through this pilot. The first pilot began in November 2019 and has expanded to five locations.

3. Develop regional interagency partnerships focused on agencies serving youth.

The Missouri Interagency Transition Team was formed through the Office of Special Education and includes members representing state-level agencies, including MVR, across Missouri who have an interest in improving postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities.

4. Coordinate services with workforce development programs that target youth.

MVR is piloting a progressive work-based learning program that promotes middle skills. Through this program, MVR partners with CRPs and Missouri Job Centers that provide WIOA services. Participants are enrolled in a career and technical education program and receive wrap-around supports from MVR, job centers, and CRPs. They receive paid work experiences related to training, which can lead to employment utilizing technical skills in a stable industry at a higher median wage with the opportunity for future career growth and credential attainment.

Goal 3: Strengthen relationships with employers across Missouri.

Target: Increase the number of employers served and the number of services provided by 1.5% per program year.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal partially met.

MVR developed a process within its case management system to capture employer services. In PY 2023, 2,409 employers were provided 16,801 services. In PY 2024, 3,195 employers were provided 14,831 services.

The number of employers increased and met the goal; however, the number of services decreased. During 2024, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education issued a final rule defining the sixth

performance indicator, Effectiveness in Serving Employers, as “Retention with the Same Employer.” As this measure had not been defined until 2024, states had the option to use a different measure of effectiveness. MVR and the core partners chose to use “Repeat Business Customer” as the state’s performance measure.

Strategies:

1. Connect candidates to employers recruiting for apprenticeship opportunities.

MVR continues to connect clients with employers providing apprenticeship opportunities. The MVR Business Services team works directly with employers as well as WIOA partners to share the costs of the training.

2. Identify and connect with businesses offering career pathways paying above median wage.

MVR’s Business Services representatives are connecting with employers paying \$15.00 an hour or higher.

3. Expand Nexus groups across the state to strengthen WIOA partnerships and gain access to employers.

Nexus groups are employment collaboratives that include MVR, WIOA partner agencies, and employers. The groups focus on connecting candidates with barriers to employment to business partners through meetings, planned events, and panel discussions. There are 13 active Nexus groups statewide. The Business Services team is working with its partners, such as the Family Support Division and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, to create new groups and organize monthly meetings.

4. Utilize the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect candidates to employers.

The Business Services team continues to utilize TAP and provided TAP-focused trainings for staff in order to increase participation. The team has improved marketing efforts through presentations at new counselor trainings, discussions at staff meetings, and participation in the VR/CRP summits.

PY 2024 Goals for the Supported Employment Program and strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals were as follows:

Goal 1: Maintain high quality supported employment services.

Target: Increase or maintain the number of annual CRP summits.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

Strategies:

1. Identify and share best case practices around providing supported employment services.

MVR partners with two divisions of the Department of Mental Health to provide the supported employment services of Individual Placement Support (IPS) and customized employment. Through these partnerships, MVR identifies and shares best case practices. MVR works with CRPs to provide supported employment services. District offices meet with local CRPs to outline joint activities. MVR

and CRP staff offer input on service delivery processes and develop action plans to improve those processes.

2. Continue to provide training through annual CRP Summits.

MVR held four statewide in-person VR/CRP summits during 2024 and 2025 with an added virtual option.

Goal 2: Implement collaborative programs to promote braiding of services within the statewide workforce development system.

Target: Increase or maintain the number of agreements with Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers providing IPS services per program year.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide and expand IPS services statewide in partnership with the Department of Mental Health-Behavioral Health Division.

MVR partners with the Department of Mental Health-Behavioral Health Division to provide IPS services to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness through 34 IPS locations statewide.

2. MVR entered into contract with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a plan for implementing customized employment services across Missouri.

MVR partners with the Department of Mental Health-Developmental Disabilities Division to deliver customized employment services that promote specific abilities of individuals with disabilities and meets employers' needs through flexible strategies. Currently there are two active pilot sites.

2. Performance on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

Under WIOA, MVR and the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind together determine and negotiate levels of performance with Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

MVR's actual and negotiated levels of performance for PY 2024:

Indicator 1 - Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit

Negotiated Levels: PY 2024: 66.0%

Actual Levels: PY 2024: 62.8%

Indicator 2 - Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit

Negotiated Levels: PY 2024: 63.7%

Actual Levels: PY 2024: 60.5%

Indicator 3 - Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit

Negotiated Levels: PY 2024: \$5,676

Actual Levels: PY 2024: \$6,173

Indicator 4 - Credential Attainment Rate

Negotiated Levels: PY 2024: 62.0%

Actual Levels: PY 2024: 58%

Indicator 5 - Measurable Skill Gains

Negotiated Levels: PY 2024: 75.2%

Actual Levels: PY 2024: 71%

MVR surpassed the negotiated target for median earnings. MVR continues to explore challenges related to discrepancies between the actual and negotiated levels for 2nd and 4th quarter employment rate after exit, measurable skill gains (MSG), and credential attainment. One key factor regarding MSG and credential attainment, identified by RSA through technical assistance, is reporting within the case management system. Another factor is staff training on requirements for reporting MSG and credential attainment. MVR has corrected the case management system error and will continue to provide training to staff on accurate reporting. MVR has also identified attrition of individuals after services as a core reason the 2nd and 4th quarter employment rate did not meet the negotiated level. MVR has implemented strategies to increase client engagement throughout the life of the case to increase 2nd and 4th quarter employment rates.

On February 23, 2024, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education issued a final rule defining the sixth performance indicator, Effectiveness in Serving Employers, as “Retention with the Same Employer.” Each state must report an annual aggregated and unduplicated performance result for PY 2024, across the six WIOA core programs.

3. The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (Sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).

MVR continues to support innovation and expansion activities through its commitment to supported employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Multiple ad hoc teams composed of MVR and CRP staff work together developing new ideas and designing processes to successfully support and implement those new ideas. A CRP-MVR team was created to assess service overlap between the Department of Mental Health’s Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) and CRPs. The team identified ways to braid services to pilot customized employment (CE) as a new service category in Missouri. In addition, this team mapped out a strategic training plan to include both on-and off-site technical assistance.

MVR is also supporting innovation and expansion activities through new pilots in several areas such as apprenticeships and peer mentoring for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems and homeless and housing insecure youth. Through these pilots, MVR is

collaborating with numerous partners such as the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, CILs, CRPs, University of Missouri, Missouri State University, Office of Workforce Development, and employers. Braiding services through these collaborations opens opportunities to reach more Missourians with disabilities desiring to work.

MVR utilized Section 110 funds for the SRC and funds for the SILC contracted activities. These funds were primarily used to pay for council members' travel, meeting expenses, and supplies, and to operate the SILC. MVR spent \$5,550.07 from the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2023 VR grant and \$3,342.80 from the FFY 2024 VR grant in PY 2024 on the SILC contract. MVR spent \$752.64 from the FFY 2024 VR grant and \$3,261.35 from the FFY 2025 VR grant on SRC members' expenses.

e. Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

1. Acceptance of title VI funds:

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

2. If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of Title VI funds received under Section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of Title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.

The state plan goals and priorities for the distribution of funds from section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services are:

Goal 1: Implement customized employment (CE) statewide.

Target: Increase CE service sites by 1 site per program year over the next five years.

Baseline data: PY 2024: 1 CE site

Objective: Maintain high quality supported employment services.

Strategies:

1. Finalize CE policy that includes procedures, roles, and evaluation metrics.
2. Update (CRP) agreement and the CSG policy.
3. Launch an initial CE training for all VR staff and integrate CE into the ongoing staff training plan.
4. CE team will develop and manage a process for monitoring program progress.
5. Promote VR as a high value community resource to employers.

Goal 2: Implement collaborative programs to promote braiding of services within the statewide workforce development system.

Target: Increase or maintain the number of agreements with Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers providing IPS services per program year.

Baseline data: PY 2023: 33 PY 2024: 34

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide and expand IPS services statewide in partnership with the Department of Mental Health-Behavioral Health Division.
2. MVR contracted with the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a plan for implementing customized employment services across Missouri.

Title VI funds are utilized for supported employment services through a fee-for-service as established in MVR's supported employment cost analysis. Title I funds are also utilized for the provision of supported employment services.

MVR estimates that the number of eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities who will receive supported employment services during FFY 2027 is 7,514. MVR estimates that it will spend Title I and Title VI funds of \$21,702,881 in FFY 2027 on supported employment services. These services will be provided through nonprofit, accredited CRPs.

With funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, MVR focuses on delivering services that result in competitive, integrated employment. It can provide or arrange for extended services for a period not to exceed four years. However, to leverage funding, it relies on community rehabilitation providers and community organizations for the provision of supported employment services, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities or until the youth turns 25 years of age, whichever comes first. These services and activities may include job coaching, job supports (both on and off the job), guidance and counseling, retention services, resources for benefits counseling, information and referral, and employer consultation.

To increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities, MVR leverages other public and private funds through its continued work the DMH-DD division in utilizing home and community-based waivers. It will continue to work closely with the Missouri Department of Social Services MO HealthNet Division and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities divisions to ensure that youth with the most significant disabilities are receiving extended services.

3. Supported employment services may be provided with Title 1 or Title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with Section 101(a)(22) and Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.

MVR maintains cooperative, written agreements with nonprofit, private CRPs to provide services on a fee-for-service basis. All supported employment (SE) fees authorized by MVR are a uniform, flat rate as recommended by the RSA 107 Monitoring Review.

SE on-the-job support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, are provided with SE grant dollars only after job placement. MVR routinely expends its SE grant allotment after which Title I funds are utilized.

Other services, which support individuals seeking supported employment, that lead up to job placement, must be paid with Title I funds. These may include:

- discovery and exploration;
- provision of long-term, extended services support with the client or employer a minimum of twice per month; and
- customized employment for individuals and employers.

MVR is committed to providing greater access to SE services. The scope of SE services reaches throughout the state. All counties in Missouri are being served by CRPs that provide SE services.

MVR district offices meet with local CRPs to outline joint activities to assist mutual consumers reach employment outcomes. MVR and CRP staffs both offer input on service delivery processes during partnering meetings and develop action plans to improve those processes. Other collaborative activities involve joint training programs.

One of the methods that MVR uses to continuously improve SE services and the service delivery process is through the use of a strategic team. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to improve services, review feedback, monitor progress and to discuss current and future issues warranting attention.

MVR and the CRPs developed an outcome-based service model that emphasizes quality employment outcomes and retention.

DMH-BH and MVR have been working to increase access to evidence-based supported employment, also known as IPS, for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. Missouri has 34 Community Mental Health Centers participating in this implementation collaborative. DMH and MVR are implementing IPS for youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

Fifty percent of MVR's SE grant allotment must be reserved and expended on the provision of SE services, including extended services, to youth with the most significant disabilities. MVR can provide up to 24 months of SE on-the-job supports after placement and may extend services, if necessary.

Extended services are provided after the provision of supported employment and when job coaching falls below 10 percent. MVR utilizes CRPs or identified long-term providers for the provision of extended services that continue after case closure. This includes but is not limited to, at minimum, two contacts with the consumer each month. Extended services may be provided to youth with most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years, or until the individual turns 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth, whichever comes first. MVR utilizes CRPs or identified long-term providers for the provision of extended services for youth with most significant disabilities that continue after case closure to support the consumer's needs.

Once a supported employment case is closed, MVR no longer funds extended services. The CRP or other identified provider is responsible for securing long-term funding.

4. Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(a) and 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(c)(19)(v).

MVR enters into cooperative written agreements with CRPs to provide services on a fee-for-service basis to individuals with disabilities, which includes youth with the most significant disabilities. Ad hoc teams composed of MVR and CRP staff worked together developing new ideas and designing processes to successfully support and implement those new ideas. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to improve services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities who are receiving supported employment services.

The CRPs provide SE services, which may include:

- job supports;
- job accommodations;
- workplace natural supports;
- facilitation of social inclusion in the workplace;
- provision of long-term, extended services support with the individual or employer a minimum of twice per month; and
- customized employment for individuals and employers.

MVR has signed cooperative agreements with 34 nonprofit Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers to provide IPS services, as well as extended services, to MVR clients including youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

f. Annual Estimates

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

1. Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—

A. VR Program; and

Through the MVR program in FFY 2027, the estimated number of individuals who are eligible for services, the estimated number of individuals expected to receive services, the estimated costs of services using Title I funds, and estimated number of eligible individuals who will not receive services are listed below. The estimated total number of individuals eligible for services and who will receive services under the VR Program is 24,571. MVR estimates that 5,204 individuals will not receive services due to the implementation of an order of selection.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
I	14,745	14,745	\$42,588,110	0
II	14,449	9,451	\$27,296,152	4,998
III	580	375	\$1,083,116	205

B. Supported Employment Program.

Through the Supported Employment program in FFY 2027, the estimated number of individuals who are eligible for services, the estimated number of eligible individuals who are expected to receive services, the estimated costs of services using Title VI funds, and the estimated number of individuals who will not receive services are listed below. These estimates are included in the total estimates in (f)(1)(A) above. MVR projects that the number of eligible individuals expected to receive services under the Supported Employment program is 7,514. This estimate is derived from the number of individuals who were authorized supported employment services and is based on a 5% increase from PY 2024.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
I	7,514	7,514	\$21,702,881	n/a

The estimated total costs of services using Title 1 and Title VI funds is \$70,967,378.

g. Order of Selection

1. Pursuant to Section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more priority categories closed.

2. For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—

A. The justification for the order

MVR continues to see an increase in new applicants entering the program, as well as increases in spending associated with serving those applicants. Although MVR's federal grant award increased by approximately 10% in FFY 2025, applicant and expenditure projections for FFY 2027 estimate a shortage in federal spending authority making it necessary to continue under an order of selection. An order of selection ensures current MVR participants with employment plans can be served without interruption through the management of the wait list for new applicants. Priority Category II: An individual with a significant disability and Priority Category III: An individual with a disability, as defined in section (g)(2)(B), closed on December 9, 2024. They are impacted by MVR's spending authority for federal funds. Insufficient appropriation authority impacts the estimates in Priority Categories II and III, requiring MVR to continue operating under an order of selection.

MVR's plan to move out of the order of selection is a continuation of advocacy in conjunction with its designated state agency to increase federal funding appropriation capacity. MVR has requested federal funding appropriation capacity through the legislative budget process which will allow MVR to access federal funds awarded to Missouri.

B. The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities is based upon the eligible individual's placement in one of the following priority categories:

Priority Category I: An individual with the most significant disability as defined below.

Priority Category II: An individual with a significant disability as defined below.

Priority Category III: An individual with a disability as defined below.

Definitions:

Individual with the Most Significant Disability: An individual with a significant disability who is seriously limited in three or more of the following functional areas: self-care, communication, mobility, self-direction, work tolerance, work skills, and/or interpersonal skills.

Individual with a Significant Disability: An individual with a disability who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or two functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance and/or work skills;

a. whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

b. who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculoskeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

Individual with a disability: all other eligible individuals with a disability.

MVR serves eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities (Priority Category 1) first. Eligible individuals with significant disabilities (Priority Category 2) are served next, followed by eligible individuals with disabilities (Priority Category 3).

C. The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

MVR's goal for serving eligible individuals in each priority category is to remove them from the waiting list and place them into services as funds become available. MVR will use the following procedures to manage waiting lists and assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral:

- 1) An eligible individual will be placed in the appropriate priority category and receive written notification of the assigned priority category. The eligible individual's date of application will be used to determine the order of services within a priority category.
- 2) Individuals will be notified of their right to appeal their category assignment.
- 3) An eligible individual's placement in a priority category may be changed under justifiable circumstances.
- 4) Rationale for placement will appear in the individual's case file.
- 5) The order of selection shall in no way affect the provision or authorization of diagnostic and evaluation services needed to determine eligibility.
- 6) The order of selection shall in no way affect the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who were receiving such services prior to being determined eligible for VR and were placed in a closed category.
- 7) Eligible individuals who are at immediate risk of losing employment and require specific services or equipment to maintain employment are not subject to the order of selection for only those specific services or equipment necessary to maintain employment.

8) Services authorized or provided to any eligible individual shall not be disrupted as a result of an order of selection or the closing of a priority category.

9) All funding arrangements for providing services, including any third-party arrangements and awards by MVR, shall be consistent with the order of selection. If any funding arrangements are inconsistent with the order of selection, MVR shall renegotiate these funding arrangements so that they are consistent with the order of selection.

10) Eligible individuals who are in a priority category that is not open, shall be provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, including counseling and referral for job placement, using appropriate modes of communication to assist them in preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining employment. These individuals will also be referred to other appropriate federal and state programs, including the statewide workforce investment career centers.

11) Individuals being referred to appropriate programs, as mentioned above, shall be provided the following:

(a) a notice of the referral to the agency carrying out the program

(b) information identifying a specific point of contact within the agency to which the individual is being referred

(c) information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment

MVR's projected timelines to reach an employment outcome varies significantly with each individual. It is estimated that the average number of months to reach an employment outcome for priority category I is approximately 23 months, priority category II is approximately 40 months, and priority category III is approximately 32 months.

3. Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?

Yes. MVR elects to serve eligible individuals, regardless of the established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment. Eligible individuals who are at immediate risk of losing employment and require specific services or equipment to maintain employment are not subject to the order of selection for only those specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

h. Waiver of Statewideness.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

Not Applicable

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the State VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—

A. The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

B. The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;

C. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

MVR developed a system of collecting and analyzing data annually to determine qualified personnel needs. The following information describes the data system utilized in determining personnel/personnel development; recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel; standards; requirements for vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC) positions; staff development activities; personnel to address individual communication needs; performance evaluation system; and coordination with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

To assist in determining the number of personnel employed to deliver vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, MVR annually reviews data from its case management system. This information includes the average daily census of individuals served and the number of new applications, individualized plans for employment, successful employment outcomes, and cases closed without a successful employment outcome. MVR's human resource section tracks the number of employees and their personnel categories.

The VRCs, district supervisory positions and clerical staff are directly involved in providing services for individuals with disabilities (9 district office supervisory staff members have a partial caseload). The number of individuals who had an open file with MVR as of June 30, 2025, was 14,749.

MVR's management team reviews each vacancy to determine if the position should be filled, relocated, or reclassified to a counselor position (if the position was a different one) based upon factors such as current need and expected population growth. On a regular basis, MVR evaluates caseload sizes, office workload, and staffing to maximize efficiency.

(A) (B) The Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services (OLARS) consists of the following sections: Disability Determination Services, Independent Living, Veterans Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). There are approximately 667 full-time employees in all four sections. This report will focus on the VR section. As of June 30, 2025, the breakdown of employees in the MVR Client Services section needed for service delivery is as follows:

135 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

10 Assistant District Supervisors

22 District Supervisors

54 Administrative Support Assistants

Administrative Staff:

1 Assistant Commissioner

4 Coordinators

1 Legal Counsel

5 Managers

6 Regional Managers

12 Directors

1 Human Resource Manager

15 Assistant Directors

1 Supervisor

1 Senior HR Analyst

2 HR Analysts

4 Case Quality Assurance Program Specialists

2 Fiscal Quality Assurance Program Specialists

4 Program Support Specialists

1 Senior Accounting Specialist

1 Executive Assistant

1 General Services Specialist

6 Business Specialists

(C) The projected number of personnel who will be needed by MVR to provide services in five years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with

significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors is listed in the chart below.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	135	140	160
Assistant District Supervisors	10	10	10
District Supervisors	22	23	23
Administrative Support Assistants	54	56	62
Administrative Staff	70	74	74

D. Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:

For PY 2025, the ratio of VR counselors to clients will be 1:110.

E. Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:

According to the 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 886,543 Missourians have reported that they have some type of disability. The rate of disability in the state is 15 percent. Individuals within this population could be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services in the next five years. MVR estimates that an average of 29,323 individuals will be served in PY 2030, including individuals with the most significant disabilities. This estimate is the sum of the unique count of individuals who would have an open case and an application date within PY 2030. The estimate for PY 2030 also assumes that MVR's federal spending authority will be restored, and all categories will be open.

2. Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:

A. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Maryville University in St. Louis, a private institution, offered a master's level degree program in rehabilitation counseling; however, the university discontinued the program in 2023. All remaining students completed their degrees in December 2024.

Truman State University in Kirksville offers a master's level degree program in rehabilitation counseling. This graduate program was established in the fall of 2024 to meet the significant unmet need for qualified rehabilitation counselors. This program provides rehabilitation and vocational services for clients with disabilities as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC).

Truman State University follows a cohort model designed to meet the commonly accepted national standards for counselor preparation recognized by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Truman's Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling degrees are CACREP-accredited. The rehabilitation counseling degree will not be eligible for consideration until the program has had its first graduating class.

MVR is also working with other graduate counseling programs in Missouri and offers practicum and internship opportunities.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Truman State University	Rehabilitation Counseling Program	2	2

B. The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

MVR works actively in recruiting new counselors with master's degrees in rehabilitation counseling or other related areas. As mentioned above, Missouri has one graduate level rehabilitation counseling program at Truman State University in Kirksville that, at this time, is not sufficient to produce the number of qualified rehabilitation professionals needed by MVR in all areas of the state. To address this issue, job announcements are sent to other postsecondary institutions that have rehabilitation counseling programs such as Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Emporia State University of Kansas, University of Arkansas, and Missouri universities that offer graduate-level counseling, social work and/or psychology programs.

MVR advertises all openings with the mocareers.mo.gov web page. Additionally, MVR advertises all openings on multiple online job search sites, including jobs.mo.gov, Indeed.com, LinkedIn, Handshake, and US Jobs among others.

MVR sends all job announcements to its state's historically black college, Lincoln University-Jefferson City, Missouri, as well as other historically black colleges such as Southern University-

Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Langston University-Langston Oklahoma; and Mississippi State-Starkville, Mississippi.

MVR actively recruits individuals with disabilities. District supervisors and VRCs in MVR district offices receive all VRC job notices. Other disability organizations, including CILs and CRPs, are consulted about recruiting persons with disabilities.

MVR is committed to fostering a diverse workforce by actively hiring individuals with disabilities and minority backgrounds, recognizing the unique perspectives and skills they bring to the agency. By employing individuals with an array of abilities, MVR not only enhances its commitment to accessibility and equal opportunity but also gains valuable insights into the challenges faced by those it serves. By employing individuals with disabilities, it enriches client relationships and enhances overall service quality.

MVR continues to offer non-paid as well as paid graduate internships for potential employees. MVR also considers candidates who have completed their necessary coursework and need to complete their internship requirement for open positions with the agency. During PY 2024, MVR provided one student with an unpaid internship experience to enable them to complete coursework. MVR is also open to job shadowing.

MVR is involved in a variety of activities to recruit and retain qualified rehabilitation personnel. Recruitment efforts are focused in part on maintaining good relationships with colleges and universities that offer degrees that meet state rule. MVR has a close working relationship with the upcoming graduate rehabilitation counselor program at Truman State University. MVR staff attends career fairs, serves as guest speakers, and makes regular contacts and visits to recruit students from the above master's level rehabilitation program.

MVR provides a career ladder for counselors rewarding their success and tenure. MVR has a succession plan team that is working on recruitment plans and ideas to retain qualified personnel. Leadership development and capacity building is encouraged statewide through optional training, tuition reimbursement, team membership, guidance from MVR's leadership director, and other activities. MVR encourages each staff member to view themselves as a leader in their current role.

MVR expanded its counselor recruiting efforts through an awareness campaign consisting of social media, audio spots, and programmatic display. Through its redesigned website, MVR highlights VR employment opportunities and features employee videos, which promote the "Change You Can Make" awareness campaign. MVR also developed an HR analyst recruitment position to assist in supporting its recruitment and retention operations.

C. Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

- i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and
- ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

i) MVR has a comprehensive program for in-service training and staff development for all positions. Staff at all levels will attend training in leadership development, confidentiality and best practices, sexual harassment prevention, and customer service. Each new MVR employee completes a new employee orientation program in YesLMS, VR's Learning Management System, which includes items on a hiring checklist. All new counselors attend New Counselor Training consisting of four monthly sessions. New counselors also receive online training through the Counselor Training and Resource Guide Program in YesLMS and on-the-job training with a supervisor. New administrative support staff receive online training through the Administrative Training Guide Program in YesLMS and on-the-job training with a supervisor. Supervisory staff and upper management personnel are required to attend training in leadership, supervision, hiring, interviewing, and other training offered through the state. Many MVR employees have graduated from, and some are currently participating in, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute. MVR utilizes an internal training consultant who assists in leadership training.

All new counselor staff, together with their district supervisor, completes the New Counselor Training and Resource Guide Program in YesLMS or New Administrative Staff Training Program in YesLMS, which assists in the development and understanding of the rehabilitation field and the agency's goals, priorities, and responsibilities in serving individuals with disabilities under the federal/state VR program. MVR gathers ad hoc teams to address and evaluate specific staff development needs including topics such as leadership development, training manuals, training evaluations, new counselor orientations, and MI.

In addition to New Employee Orientation, new counseling staff receives training specific to vocational counseling/career development, job development/job placement, vocational services, and case management techniques from MVR staff.

MVR has a director of Rehabilitation Technology and an assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing. These staff members specialize in assistive technology related to independent living and deaf/hard of hearing services. They interact with MoAT and CILs across the state. They attend assistive technology services training and provide resources and information when appropriate to MVR staff. An MVR staff member is a representative on the MoAT Advisory Council.

MVR supports staff attendance on an annual basis to the Power Up Conference, which promotes the use and understanding of assistive technology and rehabilitation technology services and resources

across the state. This conference is sponsored by the Missouri Assistive Technology Project (MoAT). MVR convenes an ad hoc assistive technology team, when necessary, which assists the agency in staff development activities for assistive technology.

MVR supports staff attendance at the National AgrAbility Conference. Additionally, statewide training has been provided on services and technology supports for agricultural careers.

Staff attend the Missouri Reentry Conference, which highlights best practices of state agencies and business/community/faith-based organizations serving justice-involved individuals. MVR participates in the Missouri Reentry Process.

MVR staff attend the annual Missouri and Illinois Behavioral Health Conference sponsored by the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare. The coalition represents Missouri's not-for-profit community mental health centers, which participate in the implementation of Individual Placement and Support services in collaboration with MVR and the Department of Mental Health's Behavioral Health division.

Additional annual conferences that MVR staff attend include:

- Workforce 2030 Missouri Chamber;
- Governor's Conference on Economic Development;
- Brain Injury of Missouri Annual Conference;
- Missouri Rehabilitation Association Conference;
- Association of People Supporting Employment First;
- Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness;
- Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference;
- Missouri Association of Workforce Development;
- Thompson Center Autism Conference;
- Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and
- Midwest Autism Conference.

Staff development needs are established in a number of ways. After each training, staff receive a survey to assist in developing future training topics. The MVR Training Team develops an annual training plan. The team meets with administration and quality assurance teams to identify training needs. Other methods to determine staff development needs are quality assurance reviews, evaluation of consumer satisfaction surveys, and feedback and recommendations from the State Rehabilitation Council.

MVR works to provide training in a variety of ways to accommodate staff needs. Staff members regularly participate in both in-person, virtual/remote, and web-based trainings.

The nature and scope of the staff development program is tied to MVR's overall goals and priorities. MVR is committed to improving staff competencies to ensure that the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, will be fully implemented and the philosophy embraced. MVR training supports the goals and priorities that have been established in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

ii) MVR continues to participate and has collaborative relationships with research programs and partner agencies.

MVR frequently sponsors or staff participate in other training areas such as

- motivational interviewing;
- legal and ethical issues in rehabilitation;
- medical and psychological aspects of disability;
- specific disabilities such as autism spectrum disorders, deaf/hard of hearing, borderline personality disorder, long COVID, learning disabilities, mood disorders, and psychotic disorders;
- trauma informed care;
- VR basics;
- history of VR;
- clinical supervision;
- Counselor Learning Pathway for new counselors;
- Administrative Professional Learning Pathway for new administrative professionals;
- Americans with Disabilities Act;
- transition from school to work and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA issues);
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
- rehabilitation technology;
- New Counselor and New Supervisor Training;
- deaf/hard of hearing training for counselors working with this population; and
- individual training requests pertinent to the field of rehabilitation.

When applicable, staff can receive CRC and continuing education credits.

3. Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—

A. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

(A) MVR acknowledges the state code: 5 CSR 20-500.140 is the standard in Missouri for the highest degree required for VRCs.

The State of Missouri requires that a qualified VR counselor must have the following minimum qualifications:

- a master's degree from an accredited college or university in rehabilitation counseling, guidance and counseling, psychology, social work, or closely related field; and

- fluency in American Sign Language or other appropriate mode of communication if the counselor provides services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

For individuals whose master's degree is not one of the above areas, MVR requires them to complete a certificate program in rehabilitation counseling.

Of the 135 VRCs currently employed with MVR, there are 90 employees who meet the educational requirements for 34 CFR 361.18. There are 45 employees who are currently working on a master's degree/certificate program or awaiting approval to begin a program. MVR asks employees to wait at least 11 months prior to beginning their education programs to allow for adequate time to learn the initial duties of the position. MVR has found a higher success rate in performance and education using this methodology.

MVR continues to prioritize the CSPD funding of the above-mentioned VRCs who are involved in university coursework, certification (CRC), and licensure (LPC). MVR is committed to ensuring that VRCs' tuition, fees and books are funded to obtain necessary coursework to meet the above requirements.

The human resource manager (HRM) for MVR develops an individualized plan with each newly hired staff member to identify/evaluate specific staff development needs, required courses, available resources, and timelines necessary to achieve the standards in 5 CSR 20-500.140 and 34 CFR 361.18 or the appropriate CRC requirement. The HRM also monitors each staff development plan to ensure that all objectives are met. As necessary, the HRM consults with the state licensing boards and CRC officials. All staff members are required to submit updated transcripts to the HRM to ensure compliance with the objectives of the standards.

The above plan is non-discriminatory and encourages the retraining and recruitment of individuals with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds.

Annually MVR reviews the performance for rehabilitation staff to determine if they are consistent with the actual job functions, agency values and the Rehabilitation Act mandates. MVR uses an electronic evaluation method. This evaluation is performed biannually and provides rehabilitation staff with timely feedback on performance and professional development. MVR has a team actively working through the transition to align the evaluation with MVR's mission, vision and professional development goals.

(B) MVR continuously evaluates its hiring and training processes to ensure that staff has the education and experience necessary to provide a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and needs of individuals with disabilities. As mentioned earlier, MVR uses the state code: 5 CSR 20-500.140 as the standard in Missouri for the highest degree required for VRCs. This basic educational requirement is enhanced with ongoing training for new and experienced counselors focusing on business development/engagement and effective service delivery to individuals with disabilities.

Many newly hired VRCs have had experience working with a CRP partner providing direct employment services to individuals with disabilities. Other new VRCs have previous work experience with an independent living center, job center, social service agencies, a community mental health agency, or experience in education settings. Paid or unpaid work experience in

helping individuals with disabilities obtain and maintain employment is considered valuable prior work experience.

MVR has a comprehensive professional development system that ensures that its personnel understand the medical and psychosocial aspects of a variety of disabilities. MVR endeavors to hire counselors who meet the state code: 5 CSR 20-500.140 and prior experience working with individuals with disabilities. MVR augments that with professional development opportunities by providing training focused on specific disabilities. Additionally, MVR sends VRCs to conferences that focus on specific disabilities such as the Missouri Brain Injury Association Conference. MVR has statewide and regional specialists that have had extensive training and experience in their area of expertise, e.g., business specialists, mental health, autism, rehabilitation technology, agricultural-related rehabilitation technology, benefits planning, brain injury, hearing impairments, vision impairments, learning disabilities, and self-employment. These specialists are available to provide direct assistance to clients as well as consultation with counselors. All VRCs, regardless of their tenure, have the opportunity to work with a mentor who has expertise and experience in an area that is of interest to them.

MVR's clients have repeatedly expressed the value of having a high-quality rehabilitation counselor in reaching their employment goals. This input is gained through customer satisfaction surveys, individual letters, and public hearings. In order to help VRCs assess their client's skills and abilities to obtain and retain employment, MVR has stressed the value of counseling skills. VRCs are encouraged to have a "tool bag" of skills. Primary in this tool bag is the ability to hear and understand clients' goals, provide informed choice, and address the specific barriers to successful employment. All professional MVR staff is trained in Motivational Interviewing (MI), an evidence-based practice, which helps clients and VRCs have constructive conversations that identifies their values and goals resulting in an individualized plan to reach their employment goal. Using MI, VRCs and clients identify clients' skills and abilities, the supports that they need to reach their goals, plan for setbacks and challenges, and how successful employment will affect their lives.

MVR has a multi-pronged approach to assist staff with modifying environmental and attitudinal barriers that clients face. Group training and individual assistance is provided to new and existing staff to effectively learn and perform their position. As mentioned earlier, MVR places a high value on the counseling skills of staff. All professional staff and many support staff have received four days of MI training. On-going MI training is available for all staff. MVR offers case management training to new VRCs within the first six months of their employment. New VRCs are also trained to learn to advocate and understand environmental and attitudinal barriers clients face. All VRCs are encouraged to maximize resources by knowing and forming relationships with the varied resources in their territories. Many times, these resources can assist with environmental and attitudinal barriers. MVR recognizes the value of group trainings but also provides individual assistance to VRCs through mentoring and coaching experiences.

Advances in rehabilitation technology are creating opportunities for clients. MVR has statewide and regional specialists who offer expertise in this area. These specialists provide individual consultation and also help staff remain up to date with regional trainings. Additionally, MVR utilizes Missouri Assistive Technology for consultation and training purposes.

MVR has been providing additional resources in developing effective relationships with employers in both the public and private sectors. MVR has a team of individuals whose primary responsibility is working with employers and assisting in connecting clients with potential employment. Additionally, all staff is trained and encouraged to develop relationships with businesses. MVR considers employers its partners and works toward helping them address their staffing needs.

MVR looks to the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) for local employment dynamics and labor market information. Job development and placement efforts utilize local level data to assist clients in making informed choices regarding their career goals, considering wages, turnover rates, current vacancies, and areas of job creation. MERIC has provided training to MVR staff to aid them in using its website with clients.

The MVR Business Services Team provides vocational planning training to staff and training on how to utilize vocational planning tools. One of those tools is MERIC. The team guides staff through MERIC's 11 Career Pathways for Missouri's key industries. The team also trains on the use of MERIC's Real-Time Labor Market data. The team provides training on Career Index Plus, which is an extensive and encompassing labor market tool. Further labor market training is available on Bridge, MVR's learning management system.

4. Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

MVR employs six vocational rehabilitation counselors for the deaf (RCDs), located throughout Missouri, who are skilled in manual communication for the deaf/hard of hearing. Biannually, they gather for training to discuss services and to receive training on deaf/hard of hearing topics. MVR employs an assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing who plans and organizes training. Three of the RCDs are deaf or hard of hearing. All but one have met CSPD requirements.

MVR utilize various forms of technology to communicate directly with clients and staff that are deaf/hard of hearing including videophones, email, and texting as well as communication apps.

Any approved CRP has qualified staff, or they provide language accommodations or interpreters, to deliver Employment Services Plus to deaf/hard of hearing clients.

Applicants and eligible individuals who have limited English-speaking skills are provided interpreters funded by MVR. Brochures and forms are translated into seven different languages so that individuals and families have access to information in their native language. The state has a contract with an over-the-telephone foreign language interpretation service, which MVR has utilized upon occasion for translation.

5. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

MVR works closely with the Office of Special Education and school districts to coordinate staff development activities and services for students with disabilities.

Throughout the year, MVR staff and special education personnel from both the state and local levels focus on participation in special education transition-related trainings/professional development activities. Examples of these activities include attendance and presentations at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Transition Training Institute, Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education, DESE's Powerful Learning Conference, Missouri Rehabilitation Association Conference, the DESE Administrators Conference, Missouri School Counselor Association Conference, and the Special Education Directors Academy. MVR coordinates opportunities for representatives providing pre-employment transition services to be a part of training and professional development activities. MVR hosted Transition Kickoff events for VRCs and special education teachers around the state. The events were originally held in Kansas City and Springfield and are now being replicated statewide. MVR hosted Summer Kick Off meetings for VR staff, CRPs, and MU pre-employment specialists around the state.

The Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP) agreement is an interagency state and local program agreement between the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Special Education, MVR and Career Education); Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB); and local school districts in the state of Missouri. The agreement is embedded in the state transition MOU and is available for all school districts. The purpose is to facilitate the coordination of transition services from school to postsecondary training and/or employment for students with disabilities who participate in special education programs and are eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services. The MOU outlines roles and responsibilities among participating agencies and school districts in the development of off-campus work experience programs. Through these programs, students with disabilities who are receiving services through an individualized educational plan can earn high school credit in accordance with Missouri high school graduation requirements for the number of hours they work in a paid competitive, integrated employment setting. Additionally, MVR continues to work collaboratively with providers and local school districts to meet transition needs of students.

MVR, the Office of Special Education, school personnel, and CRP staff are involved in partnership activities, joint training, and technical assistance activities. Two Youth Services team members represent MVR on the State Transition Team and the Missouri Interagency Transition Team. The Youth Services team has an active member on the state's Special Education Advisory Panel and the Missouri Parents Act's (MPACT) Board.

State Rehabilitation Council: The State Rehabilitation Council reviews and comments on the development of the CSPD plan and related policies.

j. Coordination with Education Officials.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

1. Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.

Transition services provide eligible students with disabilities the knowledge, skills and opportunities to make a successful transition to postsecondary education/training, independent living and competitive integrated employment based on their educational and career goals.

Pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS) are provided to individuals who are students with disabilities. A student with a disability as defined in Missouri is

- ages 14 through 21 and
- eligible for and receiving special education or related services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP); or
- an individual with a disability for purposes of Section 504 (individual does not need to have a 504 plan to meet the definition requirements).

MVR, in collaboration with DESE's Office of Special Education and local education agencies (LEAs), will provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services in the areas of job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for postsecondary education/training, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy, including peer mentoring, for all students in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.

Each local MVR district office will also participate in pre-employment transition coordination with the local education agency to include attending IEP meetings when invited, using conference calls and video conferences, when necessary; working with local workforce development entities and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities; coordinating pre-employment transition services with transition services provided in accordance with IDEA; and, when invited, attending person-centered planning meetings for youth receiving services under Title IX of the Social Security Act. To effectively coordinate these services, MVR:

- conducted statewide training to include guidance regarding IEP participation for all MVR staff that serve students in Missouri high schools;
- worked in partnership with the Parent Advocacy Coalition Educational Rights Center to develop a video introducing VR services that can be shown at IEP meetings; and
- is currently working in collaboration with DMH's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) to provide cross training with MVR counselors and DD support coordinators regarding their respective services.

To deliver pre-employment transition services, MVR developed two summer programs, which include a six-week paid summer work experience, one for VR eligible students with disabilities in partnership with CRPs and a program with CILs for students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR. MVR collaborated with businesses and school districts to provide services in these programs.

MVR partners with Starkloff Institute in St. Louis in the Dream Big program. Dream Big serves high school students with disabilities who plan to attend college, trade school, or technical school. Dream Big Camps are weeklong summer camps that help these students explore a range of career options and learn what it takes to become a successful and independent adult.

In addition, MVR is contracting with the University of Missouri (MU), College of Education and Human Development, to provide assistance with the provision of pre-employment transition services. The University of Missouri has 66 pre-employment transition specialists located across the state who are certified education professionals and can go into the classroom, to collaborate with local education agencies and MVR to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services. Twelve of the 66 provide pre-employment transition services in the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled.

MVR is also working with Wonderland Camp of Rocky Mount, an educational camp for children, teenagers and adults who have disabilities, to provide internship opportunities for both students and youth with disabilities. MVR sponsors students and youth with disabilities to participate in a week-long Missouri Youth Leadership Forum developed in partnership the Governor's Council on Disability that focuses on leadership, citizenship, and social and career development skills. MVR funds deaf/hard of hearing students to attend the Rochester Institute of Technology and Camp Launch at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville for a pre-employment transition services camp.

MVR is utilizing its business services specialists to work with employers, MU pre-employment transition specialists and local education agencies on creating work experiences for students with disabilities. This collaboration, known as Groundhog Job Shadow, occurs throughout the school year. MVR is collaborating with its WIOA partners in providing seamless, coordinated services to youth and students with disabilities.

MVR has a policy that outlines transition activities and services including the timely development and approval of an individualized plan for employment (IPE) for each eligible student prior to leaving high school. MVR will provide for the development of the IPE as early as possible during the transition planning process, but, at least, by the time the eligible student leaves the school setting. The IPE will include specific transition services or pre-employment transition services and supports needed for an eligible student with a disability or a youth with a disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities, to achieve an employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome. An IPE is required to be developed in consideration of and coordination with the IEP of a student with a disability under IDEA or a student's Section 504 services. The IPE will be coordinated with the IEP and developed within 90 days from the date of eligibility determination and prior to a student with a disability exiting from high school.

2. Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:

A. Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;

B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

C. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;

D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;

E. Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 C.F.R. part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

F. Assurance that, in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

(A) The formal interagency agreement is between the state educational agency, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Offices of Special Education and College and Career Readiness, and Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind. The purpose of this agreement is to facilitate the coordination of transition services from school to postsecondary training and/or employment for individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in secondary education and are/or may be eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services. This agreement addresses the following:

(A) consultation and technical assistance;

(B) transition planning to include pre-employment transition services, focusing on competitive integrated employment outcomes;

(C) roles and responsibilities and financial obligations;

(D) outreach and identification; and

(E) work-based learning experiences to include programs like Project Search.

The agreement also describes the coordination of efforts to satisfy documentation requirements regarding subminimum wage.

Collaboration may occur as a part of the Missouri Interagency Transition Team, described below.

Information may be provided regarding pre-employment transition services, MVR eligibility, and MVR transition services, as well as employment, the exploration of postsecondary training programs, and connections to community agencies/resources that may be appropriate for transition planning.

Information may be provided regarding collaboration with the local education agency (LEA) on work experience opportunities, such as internships, apprenticeships and employer-driven skills training.

Individual consultation and technical assistance may also be provided by MVR during an IEP or 504 meeting, during a person-centered planning meeting, etc. Consultation and technical assistance may occur in person, by conference call, video conferencing or by some other agreed upon means.

Special Education Advisory Panel

DESE appointed an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for youth and students with disabilities in the state. The advisory panel is appointed by the commissioner of DESE and includes an MVR assistant director of Youth Services. Other members include:

- parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)
- individuals with disabilities
- teachers
- representatives of higher education institutions that prepare special education and related services personnel
- state and local education officials
- representatives of other state agencies involved in the purchase or delivery of related services
- administrators of programs for children with disabilities
- state agencies' representatives who provide services to children with disabilities including foster care and juvenile and adult corrections
- representatives of private schools and public charter schools
- vocational, community or business organizations
- representative of Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services

Missouri Connections

Missouri Connections is a web-based career exploration tool to assist Missourians in determining their career interests, explore employment opportunities, set up career plans and establish job search strategies and resources. Sponsored by DESE, Missouri Connections is free of charge to students, parents, guidance counselors, educators and jobseekers. Through Missouri Connections,

OWD, Department of Higher Education, MVR and local school districts can utilize the same career planning tool with their clients/students. In addition to general career exploration/resource sharing, students/jobseekers may also develop a career portfolio by creating a unique username/password that will allow them to login and save information regarding their specific career interests, job search, resume, etc. Students/jobseekers who are receiving services through one or more of the above entities may also choose to share their login information thus eliminating the duplication of clients' records and allowing for more efficient and effective services for mutual clients.

Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT)

MITT was formed through the Office of Special Education and includes members representing state-level agencies, including MVR, across Missouri who have an interest in improving post-secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. MITT meets to collaborate, break down service barriers, share resources, improve overall systems of service and improve data sharing among agencies.

The manager and director of Youth Services are on the MITT and the State Transition Team. They work closely with other MVR management staff to disseminate information and provide technical assistance to improve transition services and outcomes in Missouri. Two full-time assistant directors of Youth Services each have a territory and work directly with MVR staff to provide regional support and guidance and coordinate services.

Missouri Parent Training Act and Information Center (MPACT)

Missouri Parents Act (MPACT) is Missouri's only Parent Training and Information center. It provides training and information to parents of students with disabilities from birth through age 26. A representative of MVR's supervisory staff is an active member of the MPACT Board. In addition, a representative of MPACT serves as a member of the State Rehabilitation Council.

MVR and MPACT collaborate on projects to assist students and youth with disabilities in reaching their full potential by developing Regional Transition Networks that include stakeholders from the areas of employment, independent living, education, and the community. These stakeholders create sustainable groups with goals based on the individual needs of the local network and create projects and outreach opportunities that improve life after high school for students and youth with disabilities. The needs of all students and youth with disabilities are considered, including the unique circumstances of justice-involved, foster, and adopted youth. In addition, MVR has contracted with MPACT to provide Family Employment Awareness Training.

Project Search and Other Employer-Based Transition Training Programs

Project Search is a one-year, employer-led internship opportunity for VR eligible youth with cognitive/intellectual disabilities. It provides employability skills training and workplace internships for individuals with the most significant disabilities particularly students transitioning from high school to adult life. MVR is one of five required partners in the Project Search model. The other required partners are education, a CRP, a long-term provider (follow-along) and business. In addition to the Project Search programs, MVR is partnering with the North Kansas City Public

School District, Park Hill School District, and St. Joseph School District to provide similar employer-based transition training programs prior to high school graduation for eligible students with most significant disabilities. MVR district offices and counselors that serve each of these schools serve on an executive management team. MVR has made a commitment to assist with referrals and partial funding for training for MVR eligible youth to participate in these programs. In addition, through the supported employment program model, MVR is also working in partnership with CRPs and school districts in Hannibal to provide services for youth with disabilities through their employer-led work experience programs.

(B) MVR will provide for the development of the IPE as early as possible during the transition planning process, but, at least, by the time the eligible student leaves the school setting. The IPE will include specific transition services or pre-employment transition services and supports needed for an eligible student with a disability or a youth with a disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities, to achieve an employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome. An IPE is required to be developed in consideration of and coordination with the IEP of a student with a disability under IDEA or a student's Section 504 services. The IPE will be developed within 90 days from the date of eligibility determination and prior to a student with a disability exiting from high school.

(C) The Office of Special Education shall monitor school districts in their responsibility to allocate resources and provide transition services under IDEA to students with disabilities while they are still enrolled in the secondary school setting. The LEA is primarily responsible for providing transition-related services while youth are still enrolled in the secondary school setting. Nothing under WIOA or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act shall be construed as reducing an LEA's obligation under the IDEA to provide or pay for transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities.

It is the LEA's responsibility to allocate the resources to implement the services agreed upon in the IEP. If an outside agency fails to provide agreed upon services in the IEP, it is the LEA's responsibility to reconvene the IEP team to determine how these services might now be provided. The LEA is not responsible for providing and paying for those services that another agency agreed to but failed to provide.

In collaboration with the IEP team, the special education teacher's role in transition includes

- providing specific information regarding the individual's strengths, past achievements, and current progress in school;
- discussing and identifying courses which address the student's selected program of study and work experiences that might be beneficial given the individual's interests and identifying any strategies or accommodations/modifications to access the general curriculum;
- referring students with disabilities who may be potentially eligible for VR services and in need of those services, to the pre-employment transition specialist; and

- linking students with disabilities and their families to appropriate postsecondary services, supports, adult services agencies or programs, such as MVR, prior to the student's graduation or exit from high school.

Vocational rehabilitation services are individualized and based upon the needs and employment goal of each eligible youth. Therefore, some services may only be provided during the final year of high school or after the individual graduates or exits the secondary school setting.

The LEA is primarily responsible for providing and paying for those services related to transition planning for educational purposes while the student is still in school. MVR is primarily responsible for the cost of transition planning for employment purposes. In some cases, MVR and the LEA share responsibilities for the provision of transition services, which sometimes requires sharing the financial responsibility of providing services within the parameters of both the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA.

If there is a dispute between the student/client and the LEA regarding his/her IEP, the student will follow the process provided for in the LEA's school board adopted policy for this purpose. If there is a dispute between the student/client and MVR regarding his/her IPE, the student will follow the process provided for in MVR regulations and procedure.

Most MVR services are provided at no cost to the youth and the youth's family; however, payment for some MVR services is based on individual and family income/resources and the ability to pay for costs associated with a specific service. Comparable services may be used prior to the provision of transition services.

When a student with a disability is both in school and has an IPE with MVR, the cost of services necessary for both the student's education and for the student to become employed, will be delineated between the LEA in terms of what accommodation the student needs to complete his/her high school coursework and MVR in terms of what the student requires to attain employment per the student's IPE.

(D) MVR counselors will provide outreach to and identification of students with disabilities in need of transition services. Students are not required to have an open case with MVR to participate in outreach activities.

MVR will inform education staff, students, and as appropriate, families, and other authorized representatives about pre-employment transition services and the general vocational rehabilitation program and may include at a minimum the following:

- Purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program
- MVR eligibility requirements
- Application procedures
- Scope and services that may be provided to an eligible and a potentially eligible individual

Specific outreach activities may include, but are not limited to, attendance at IEP and transition planning meetings, area career fairs, back-to-school nights, group presentations, transition fairs, and other events where information about the vocational rehabilitation program may be shared.

A referral to MVR may be initiated by school district personnel, by youth self-referral, by a family member, or by other educational or community resource agency or organization. Referral to MVR should be based upon the youth's individual employment-related needs.

Outreach activities conducted by MVR should facilitate timely referrals. The vocational rehabilitation counselor will work with the LEA to develop a referral packet for students/families, and to identify application procedures that will enable the counselor to act quickly in obtaining written parent or guardian consent to meet with the student, open a case, and proceed with an eligibility determination.

(E) MVR and the LEAs coordinate with each other to satisfy the documentation requirements in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment. MVR contracts with the University of Missouri to provide pre-ETS services to students who are potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. LEAs are encouraged to refer potentially eligible students who are known to have a plan to seek subminimum wage employment upon completion of high school for pre-ETS as early as possible. MVR will maintain documentation of the provision of pre-ETS. The MVR counselor assigned to a high school will remain the point of contact for students seeking subminimum wage employment following exit from the secondary school setting. The LEA will document the completion of transition and pre-ETS on the Summative Transition Outcomes form jointly developed by the SEA and MVR no sooner than 60 days prior to the student's graduation/exit from high school and will coordinate the student's referral to MVR. The purpose for the late referral is to allow the student to receive maximum benefit from the receipt of both transition and pre-ETS prior to the referral. MVR will open the case and provide opportunities to explore competitive, integrated employment, including participation in career counseling and information and referral. The objective is to identify strategies and opportunities to maximize skills and strengths to assist students in obtaining employment in a competitive, integrated setting. However, if this is not possible, MVR will provide documentation to youth seeking subminimum wage employment after career counseling and information and referral services were provided and following a determination of "unable to benefit from VR services."

(F) The formal interagency agreement between the state educational agency, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation and Offices of Special Education and College and Career Readiness, and Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provides the assurance that neither the SEA nor an LEA may enter into a contract or make other arrangements with a subminimum wage employer for an individual who is age 24 or younger for which work is compensated at a subminimum wage. As long as the individual is a student of an LEA, the student cannot be involved in any subminimum wage employment such as

- work in extended employment at a sheltered workshop;
- participation in work experiences where they would be paid subminimum wages; or
- participation in work experiences that are not in a competitive integrated setting.

k. Coordination with Employers

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

MVR continually reviews its strategies to develop new employer relationships and support businesses that employ individuals with disabilities. Some of its flexible strategies include increasing work-based learning opportunities, on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships, progressive employment, and customized employment. In addition, MVR works with employers to ensure they have resources for necessary workplace accommodations and rehabilitation technology.

MVR is reviewing its internal processes to work more effectively with employers and WIOA partners. MVR customizes its services to meet the needs of business. It has several employer projects underway. MVR is partnering with multiple employers to provide a work-based learning opportunity for individuals with disabilities. It is also working with various businesses to assist in their recruitment and interview process for applicants with disabilities. One tool being utilized with this purpose in mind is the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). TAP is a collaboration with businesses to assist them in finding candidates with disabilities and connecting them with available job openings.

MVR has built partnerships with most major healthcare systems in Missouri to assist individuals with disabilities connect with hospital job openings, job shadowing, and conversations with human resource staff to help MVR clients explore job options.

For several years, MVR has collaborated with workforce partners, CRPs and other agencies to plan and market events to assist employers with their inclusion initiatives. Rather than traditional job fairs where jobseekers meet with employers, MVR clients have booths for employers to visit. They create displays to showcase their talents, skills and abilities. Held at various locations around the state, these events are popular with clients and employers and continue to grow in number.

Workforce Development Boards host annual inclusion events. MVR assists with the planning and participates at these events, which focus on providing employers with relevant information on the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. Presentations range from businesses sharing their successes on becoming more inclusive to individuals with disabilities sharing their employment journeys.

In order to meet business needs, MVR developed business services specialist positions that provide statewide coverage at local and state levels. Business services specialists work with labor market information to support both business and MVR staff needs. These specialists not only offer services to employers and businesses, but they also work with WIOA partners to develop employment collaboratives creating a central point of contact among agencies. These collaboratives, known as NEXUS groups, are across the state. They focus on connecting candidates with barriers to employment to business partners through meetings, planned events and panel discussions.

MVR has representatives on regional WIOA business services teams. The teams work with local Chambers of Commerce, local educational agencies, local and state economic developers, regional planning commissions, human resource groups and other business organizations to determine employer needs in workforce regions across the state. MVR and the Office of Workforce Development have initiated an employer survey. Feedback is used to assess how to better serve businesses' needs.

MVR has statewide involvement with the Department Labor and WIOA partners regarding apprenticeship development. MVR is represented on the Missouri Apprenticeship Team with other partners ensuring it stays abreast of all apprenticeship opportunities statewide to connect MVR jobseekers to opportunities for competitive integrated employment. The agency actively markets the new apprenticeship portal, www.moapprenticeconnect.com, created by the Chamber of Commerce with the goal of making connections between apprentices and apprenticeships. MVR's assistant commissioner is a member of the Office of Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning Council along with representatives from other partner agencies.

In the St. Louis area, multiple MVR clients have been selected for or completed a certified nursing assistant registered apprenticeship program that is a partnership between St. Louis Training and Applied Technology Services (A Division of Special School District), the Department of Labor, Missouri Job Centers and employers.

MVR is an active member with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation's National Employment Team (NET). This team represents a national network to connect businesses with a footprint in multiple states. It provides MVR with the opportunity to share with and learn from other public vocational rehabilitation agencies.

MVR utilizes the expertise of each State Rehabilitation Council member, which includes individuals typically associated with employers such as professionals from CRPs, CILs, workforce development, business, industry and labor. The council representatives provide valuable input on working with employers to increase competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities.

MVR is utilizing its business services specialists to work with employers on providing paid and unpaid work experiences for youth and students with disabilities. It has been coordinating with employers, school districts, CRPs and CILs to provide summer work experience programs. During 2025, 1,817 VR-eligible students participated in summer work experiences through CRPs, and eight CILs worked with 41 potentially VR-eligible students. The business services specialists work with employers, MU transition specialists and local education agencies on creating work experiences for students with disabilities. This collaboration, known as Groundhog Job Shadow Month, occurs throughout the year. MVR is working with Wonderland Camp, of Rocky Mount, on an internship program. MVR continues to collaborate with its WIOA partners in providing seamless, coordinated services to youth and students with disabilities.

1. Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop

opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

MVR and Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) have collaborated to develop a cooperative agreement to ensure maximum statewide utilization of services. By establishing a cooperative relationship, MVR and MoAT can increase rehabilitation technology services utilization and understanding by taking advantage of the expertise and knowledge within each agency. The agreement provides a plan for the coordination of services; for using the resources of the cooperating agencies to the best advantage; to provide information sharing, technical support and training; to facilitate the referral of potential eligible individuals between agencies; and to jointly serve eligible individuals in obtaining rehabilitation technology services. An MVR staff member is a representative on the MoAT Advisory Council. MVR staff participate in activities, training programs, and conferences sponsored by MoAT.

In addition to MVR's strong collaboration with MoAT, it has established strategies to ensure there are opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings through the utilization of assistive technology.

MVR works jointly with community rehabilitation providers and other partners to develop and sponsor on-going training in rehabilitation technology services.

MVR utilizes several rehabilitation technology projects, located at various Centers for Independent Living (CILs) statewide, which have demonstration centers for exploring, reviewing, and demonstrating various rehabilitation technology devices, services, and resources.

MVR has a director and assistant director of Rehabilitation Technology services and an assistant director of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. These staff members specialize in assistive technology related to independent living and deaf/hard of hearing services. They interact with MoAT and CILs across the state.

2. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

MVR works closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded Agricultural Engineering Extension of the University of Missouri in the delivery of information and assistance for agricultural operators with disabilities.

MVR, the AgrAbility Project, housed within the University of Missouri, and the Brain Injury Association of Missouri have a productive working relationship. The mutual goals of MVR and AgrAbility are a commitment of delivering vocational rehabilitation services, rehabilitation technology, information, education and a safe environment for farm operators with disabilities. Operating under an MOU, MVR and AgrAbility completed a fee-for-service plan for rehabilitation technology services.

MVR and AgrAbility staff set the following goals for future activities:

- Collaborate with the National AgrAbility Project on hosting joint training with partner agencies, MVR staff, community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) staff, consumers and AgrAbility staff.
- Participate in national conferences and forums on AgrAbility, MVR, and rehabilitation technology services for rural agricultural services for eligible individuals with disabilities.

3. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

MVR sponsors students with disabilities to participate in the Governor's Council on Disability Missouri Youth Leadership Forum that focuses on leadership, citizenship, social and career development skills. CRPs work with out-of-school youth in providing job development and placement services along with skills training.

MVR cooperates with the CILs in providing services for adults and students with disabilities. It coordinates summer work experience projects with the CILs. The CIL Summer Pre-Employment Transition Services programs provides potentially VR-eligible students with disabilities access to job exploration activities, workplace readiness training and social support and self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

4. State use contracting programs;

MVR does not participate in state-use contracting programs.

5. State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

MVR has an MOU with the Missouri State Medicaid Authority, Missouri Department of Social Services MOHealthNet Division, which considers the requirements of WIOA. This includes coordination of employment activities with the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) Division of Behavioral Health (BH) and Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD), which serve individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual disabilities provided under the Medicaid state plan and waivers.

6. State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;

MVR has an MOU with DMH, the state agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health services, which covers DMH's BH and DD divisions. The agreement outlines the collaboration on existing services, alignment of funding sources, information and data sharing, referrals and on-going development of services.

DMH's BH and MVR work together to increase access to evidence-based supported employment, also known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS), for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. Missouri has 34 Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers (CMHCs) participating in this implementation collaborative. Ongoing technical assistance and fidelity reviews to the evidence-based practice are provided by a state trainer and a team consisting of MVR and DMH employees. The partnership between DMH and MVR includes a training format, offered to interested CMHCs statewide, on adopting IPS and on improving existing

employment activities within treatment services. DMH and MVR implemented IPS for youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

MVR partners with the DMH-DD division to deliver customized employment services that promote specific abilities of individuals with disabilities and meets employers' needs through flexible strategies.

Additional partnering activities include the sponsoring of an employment summit with the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare to facilitate clinical integration of behavioral health and community employment efforts and MVR's and DMH BH's co-funding of the customized Missouri benefits planning website Disability Benefits 101.

MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with DMH and the governor's office in a variety of projects and activities. MVR has active participation in many of DMH programs.

7. State agency responsible for providing mental health services; and

MVR has an MOU with DMH, the state agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health services, which covers DMH's BH and DD divisions. The agreement outlines the collaboration on existing services, alignment of funding sources, information and data sharing, referrals and on-going development of services.

DMH's BH and MVR work together to increase access to evidence-based supported employment, also known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS), for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. Missouri has 34 Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers (CMHCs) participating in this implementation collaborative. Ongoing technical assistance and fidelity reviews to the evidence-based practice are provided by a state trainer and a team consisting of MVR and DMH employees. The partnership between DMH and MVR includes a training format, offered to interested CMHCs statewide, on adopting IPS and on improving existing employment activities within treatment services. DMH and MVR implemented IPS for youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

Additional partnering activities include the sponsoring of an employment summit with the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare to facilitate clinical integration of behavioral health and community employment efforts and MVR's and DMH BH's co-funding of the customized Missouri benefits planning website Disability Benefits 101.

MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with DMH and the governor's office in a variety of projects and activities. MVR has active participation in many of DMH programs.

8. Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system.

Public Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)

In collaboration with the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), MVR has written cooperative agreements with all 34 public IHEs in Missouri. These agreements outline the

responsibilities of each entity regarding the provision of services pursuant to the regulations specified in 34 CFR 361.53(d)(1).

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

MVR and CAP management staff meet on a quarterly basis to discuss important issues such as order of selection, new policies, best case practices, due process hearings and mediation, performance measures, joint training activities and public hearings. The CAP is a frequent participant and presenter at MVR-sponsored training sessions. The director of advocacy services with Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services, which CAP is a part of, is a governor-appointed member of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council and sits on the Council's Planning Committee, which reviews the state plan, and also on the Impartial Hearing Officer and Program Evaluation committees.

Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH)

MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with DMH and the governor's office in a variety of projects and activities. The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council has active and cooperative participation with MVR, DMH, the governor's office and other agencies.

MVR has active participation in the following DMH programs:

- Division of Behavioral Health--Psychiatric Services State Advisory Council
- Division of Developmental Disabilities State Employment Leadership Network
- MVR/Division of Behavioral Health Individual Placement with Supports Evidence-Based Supported Employment Program implementation

MVR partners with the Department of Mental Health-Developmental Disabilities Division to deliver customized employment services that promote specific abilities of individuals with disabilities and meets employers' needs through flexible strategies.

MVR is collaboratively funding Disability Benefits 101 with DMH's Division of Behavioral Health Services.

MVR fosters cooperation and partnership with the Department of Mental Health's Behavioral Health Division through a statewide collaborative, which is a steering team comprised of both agencies to direct the collaborative efforts to serve individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.

MVR has signed cooperative agreements with 34 nonprofit Community Mental Health Centers, which provide IPS services to MVR clients.

Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB)

MVR and RSB have a cooperative agreement for serving individuals who are Deaf-blind. Individuals who meet the Helen Keller definition of Deaf-blind may receive services from both agencies. MVR and RSB staff participated in joint training to discuss the cooperative agreement and best-case practices developed to outline coordination of services from both agencies. The cooperative agreement provides an opportunity for each agency to serve individuals with multiple disabilities

by taking advantage of the skills and expertise within each agency, while at the same time, utilizing the resources of MVR and RSB to the best advantage.

Missouri Reentry Process

MVR participates in the Missouri Reentry Process, which encourages collaboration between state and local agencies to improve the transition of justice involved individuals leaving prison and returning to Missouri communities and work. State and local agencies include the Departments of Corrections, Office of Workforce Development, Mental Health, Revenue, Social Services, Economic Development, Public Safety, and Health and Senior Services; Elementary and Secondary Education; Missouri Board of Probation and Parole; and Office of the State Court Administrator. Local community representatives include law enforcement, the faith-based community, crime victims and service/treatment providers.

Missouri was the first state to join Reentry 2030, a national initiative that advances successful reintegration through system change. The governor, the Missouri Department of Corrections, the U.S. Department of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance, and Missouri state leaders have committed to Reentry 2030 with the goal of creating positive reentry outcomes for individuals transitioning from incarceration to society. Two VR employees are members of the Reentry 2030 State Advisory Team. VR provides dedicated staff to serve at and offer outreach to Department of Corrections' facilities, creates policy to guide reentry work, and maintains an internal team that focuses on reentry efforts.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

There are 21 Independent Living Centers in Missouri. MVR and the CILs work together on a regular basis to routinely share referrals and provide services to mutual clientele. A number of CILs have MVR district staff as active board members.

MVR continues to collaborate with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the CILs to provide direct services to individuals with disabilities. The state plan developed by SILC and the CILs details the tasks necessary to accomplish the delivery of independent living services that will assist consumers with disabilities to achieve their goals. MVR and SILC utilize an outcome-based measurement tool for CILs to determine consumer satisfaction.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Office of Special Education and Missouri Sheltered Workshop Managers

MVR works with DESE's Office of Special Education and Missouri sheltered workshop managers to comply with Section 511 of WIOA. This collaboration ensures that individuals with disabilities have access to information and services that will enable them to achieve competitive integrated employment. The Office of Special Education provides funding and technical assistance along with regulations and guidelines for the establishment and operation of sheltered workshops. Missouri sheltered workshop managers partner with MVR to carry out the requirements of Section 511. MVR staff provides workshop employees with career counseling and information and referral to local geographic resources that offer employment-related services and support to reach competitive

integrated employment. MVR has dedicated staff members to assist in the implementation of Section 511 activities.

Governor's Council on Disability

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) promotes full participation and inclusion of the nearly 1 million Missourians with disabilities in all aspects of community life by educating citizens, businesses, schools, universities and others of their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

MVR sponsors students and youth with disabilities to participate in a week-long Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, developed by the GCD that focuses on leadership, citizenship, and social and career development skills.

An MVR staff member is the liaison to the GCD and attends its quarterly meetings. Likewise, the GCD executive director attends the SRC quarterly meetings and provides input.

9. Other private nonprofit organizations.

MVR enters into cooperative written agreements with nonprofit, private CRPs to provide services on a fee-for-service basis to individuals with disabilities. MVR does not own or operate any of the programs. The CRP must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) or other approved accreditation entities as specified in the agreement. All CRPs must agree to the provisions of and sign the cooperative agreement with MVR prior to providing services to MVR consumers. CRPs provide services which may include job development, supported employment, employment skills training, employment services and employment transition services for individuals with disabilities. All CRP programs emphasize community integrated competitive employment.

MVR district offices meet with local CRPs to outline joint activities assisting mutual consumers in reaching employment outcomes. MVR and CRP staff offer input on service delivery processes and develop action plans to improve those processes. Other collaborative activities involve joint training programs.

MVR held four statewide in-person VR/CRP summits and one virtual during 2025. MVR staff and CRP direct services staff attended the meetings. The purpose of the summits is to enhance communication, promote partnering, share best practices, gather feedback and provide joint training. MVR and the Individual Placement Support (IPS) Services Team held several IPS summits.

The CRP-MVR team reviews and updates goals and priorities within the CRP-MVR agreement. Through collaborative efforts, MVR and CRP partners have strengthened the requirements for CRPs who want to provide Employment Services Plus in the areas of deaf/hard of hearing, brain injury, and/or autism spectrum disorder.

Collaboration and partnership continue to be cornerstones of the relationship between MVR and CRPs in Missouri and have created an environment of creativity and innovation. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to review progress on projects, service delivery and to discuss current and future issues warranting attention.

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The VR agency must select the “Edit” button to review and agree to the VR State plan Assurances.

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the

funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances will be met?

Yes

Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General) Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA[1], and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;

[1] Public Law 113-128.

Enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

2. In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit)[2] agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[3], the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations[4], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

Enter the name of designated State agency

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency, or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[5], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations[6], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

4. The designated State unit or, if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.

7. The (enter the name of authorized representative below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

Enter the name of authorized representative below

Chris Clause, Ph.D.

8. The (enter the title of authorized representative below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;

Enter the title of authorized representative below

Assistant Commissioner

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

Footnotes

[¹] Public Law 113-128.

[²] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[³] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[⁴] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

[⁵] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[⁶] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

Certification Signature

To review and complete the Certification section of the VR portion of the State plan, please select the “Edit” button.

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Chris Clause, Ph.D.
Title of Signatory	Assistant Commissioner
Date Signed	

GEPA 427 Form Instructions for Application Package - Vocational Rehabilitation

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) ([20 U.S.C. 1228a](#)) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity’s existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?
 - Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
 - Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants

may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.
- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to [GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package](#)

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

[GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package](#)

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation's (MVR) mission of "empowering people with disabilities through employment" captures the purpose and essence of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Program.

MVR guarantees equitable access to and equitable participation in the VR program, Title IV of WIOA, through its values and priorities, which include

- promoting opportunities to access postsecondary training services.
- serving potentially eligible students.
- engaging in continuous outreach efforts.
- creating employment opportunities through strong community partnerships.
- ensuring all VR services are individualized and available across all district offices.
- capitalizing on technology and new efficiencies.

MVR guarantees equitable access to and equitable participation in the VR program with regard to race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute in its programs or employment practices as

required by Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act (GINA), or USDA Title VI.

MVR also requires its providers to adhere to the same nondiscrimination standards and equitable access to and equitable participation in service delivery.

MVR is committed to equitable access through its participation on various boards, commissions, employer groups, and teams that promote programs intended to benefit individuals with disabilities. MVR staff are members of local workforce boards, the Missouri Assistive Technology Council, the State Rehabilitation Council, the Governor's Council on Disability, the Missouri Interagency Transition Team, Reentry 2030, SB 40 boards, the State Independent Living Council, the Missouri Apprenticeship Team, the Missouri Parent Training Act and Information Center (MPACT) Board, the Special Education Advisory Panel, and Nexus groups (employment collaboratives).

MVR has entered into cooperative agreements and memorandums of understanding with agencies and entities to promote equitable access to services for individuals with disabilities, such as the MOU between MVR, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, Department of Social Services MO Healthnet Divisions, and the Department of Mental Health Divisions of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; the University of Missouri AgrAbility Program; the Inter-Agency Transition Agreement between the Offices of Special Education and College and Career Readiness, Department of Social Services, and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind; local workforce boards; and with nonprofit, private community rehabilitation providers.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

[GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package](#)

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

MVR is aware that barriers can impede equitable access to and equitable participation in the services it provides. Some of the barriers that MVR has identified as impediments to its program are listed below. Proactive strategies have been developed to mitigate these barriers and are addressed under question 3.

Disabilities – Individuals with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities, have barriers to employment due to physical and/or mental impairments. In addition to their disability, they can face the following barriers:

- Communication barriers — different languages spoken, deafness, hard of hearing
- Cultural differences – cultural barriers can be a result of differences in languages, belief, or values.
- Transportation – barriers include lack of dependable personal or available public transportation or geographical locations such as rural areas
- Justice-involved individuals – stereotyping, lack of employability
- Homelessness – shortage of adequate housing, poor economic conditions, disability-related

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

The fact that an individual has a physical or mental disability, in and of itself, can impede access to MVR's services. Different types of disabilities create the need for specialized services. To address this issue, MVR developed Employment Services Plus to assist individuals with autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury or deafness/hearing loss who require additional supports to reach their employment goals.

MVR provides interpreters and CART services for the deaf/hard of hearing, as well as interpreters for individuals with language barriers.

There are 23 ADA compliant MVR offices providing statewide coverage. Lack of transportation and broadband accessibility create barrier. Vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) meet clients where they are whether that is in-home or at a convenient location for the client. They can also meet at a Missouri Job Center where some VRCs are housed for client convenience. The job centers are physically accessible. To address transportation barriers, VR offices work with local transportation providers, such as OATS, and with partner agencies that may be able to assist.

For individuals unable to meet in person, MVR offers virtual service delivery including online self-referrals and video conferencing. VRCs are located in every school district across the state to serve students with disabilities. MVR provides pre-employment transition services designed to reach

students with disabilities at an earlier age, which can lead to a better transition from school to postsecondary, training, or employment.

MVR offers a variety of rehabilitation technology services, assistive devices, and equipment to individuals who need assistance to increase, maintain, or improve their functional capabilities. MVR's statewide rehabilitation technology specialists provide technical assistance to counselors to better serve individuals with functional limitations. MVR has a cooperative agreement with Missouri Assistive Technology that provides a plan for the coordination of services; for using the resources of the cooperating agencies to the best advantage; to provide information sharing, technical support and training; to facilitate the referral of potential eligible individuals between agencies; and to jointly serve eligible individuals in obtaining rehabilitation technology services.

MVR is part of the Reentry 2030 initiative that is designed to improve reentry success for individuals on probation or parole. MVR refers individuals to other agencies or local organizations that can assist with housing. To address multiple barriers, MVR offices have a list of local resources to share with individuals.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) ([20 U.S.C. 1228a](#)) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

MVR currently utilizes all methods listed above on a continuous basis.

GEPA 427 Form Instructions for Application Package - Supported Employment

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) ([20 U.S.C. 1228a](#)) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?
 - Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
 - Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.
 - Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.
 - Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
 - Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to [GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package](#)

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

[GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package](#)

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation's (MVR) mission of "empowering people with disabilities through employment" captures the purpose and essence of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Program.

MVR guarantees equitable access to and equitable participation in the VR program, Title IV of WIOA, through its values and priorities, which include

- promoting opportunities to access postsecondary training services.
- serving potentially eligible students.
- engaging in continuous outreach efforts.
- creating employment opportunities through strong community partnerships.
- ensuring all VR services are individualized and available across all district offices.
- capitalizing on technology and new efficiencies.

MVR guarantees equitable access to and equitable participation in the VR program with regard to race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute in its programs or employment practices as required by Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act (GINA), or USDA Title VI.

MVR also requires its providers to adhere to the same nondiscrimination standards and equitable access to and equitable participation in service delivery.

MVR is committed to equitable access through its participation on various boards, commissions, employer groups, and teams that promote programs intended to benefit individuals with disabilities. MVR staff are members of local workforce boards, the Missouri Assistive Technology Council, the State Rehabilitation Council, the Governor's Council on Disability, the Missouri Interagency Transition Team, Reentry 2030, SB 40 boards, the State Independent Living Council, the Missouri Apprenticeship Team, the Missouri Parent Training Act and Information Center (MPACT) Board, the Special Education Advisory Panel, and Nexus groups (employment collaboratives).

MVR has entered into cooperative agreements and memorandums of understanding (MOU) with agencies and entities to promote equitable access to services for individuals with disabilities, such as the MOU between MVR, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, Department of Social Services MO Healthnet Divisions, and the Department of Mental Health Divisions of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DMH-BH, DMH-DD); the Inter-Agency Transition Agreement between the Offices of Special Education and College and Career Readiness, Department of Social Services, and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind; local workforce boards; and with nonprofit, private community rehabilitation providers (CRPs).

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

[GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package](#)

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

MVR is aware that barriers can impede equitable access to and equitable participation in the services it provides. Some of the barriers that MVR has identified as impediments to its supported employment (SE) program are listed below. Proactive strategies have been developed to mitigate these barriers and are addressed under question 3.

Individuals with the most significant disabilities can face barriers resulting from severe physical or mental impairments, which seriously limits one or more functional capacities such as

- mobility;
- self-care;
- self-direction;
- interpersonal skills;
- work tolerance; or
- work skills.

Individuals may lack a natural support system, which is a barrier.

In addition to having most significant disabilities, individuals needing SE services can encounter the following barriers:

- Communication barriers — different languages spoken, deafness, hard of hearing
- Cultural differences – cultural barriers can be a result of differences in languages, belief, or values.
- Transportation – barriers include lack of dependable personal or available public transportation or geographical locations such as rural areas
- Justice-involved individuals – stereotyping, lack of employability
- Youth with most significant disabilities – stereotyping, lack of employability
- Homelessness – shortage of adequate housing, poor economic conditions, disability-related

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

The fact that an individual has a physical or mental disability, in and of itself, can impede access to MVR's services.

In addressing the functional limitation barriers of self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, and work skills as well as lack of natural support systems, MVR works with state agencies, CRPs, and other community organizations in delivering a menu of services. These services are specifically designed for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities. SE services include extended services, for a period not to exceed four years, to youth with the most significant disabilities or until the youth turns 25 years of age, whichever comes first. These services and activities may include job coaching, job supports (both on and off the job), guidance and counseling, retention services, resources for benefits counseling, information and referral, and employer consultation.

To increase resources for extended services and expanded SE opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities, MVR leverages other public and private funds through its continued work with DMH-DD in utilizing home and community-based waivers. It will continue to work closely with the Missouri Department of Social Services MO HealthNet Division and the DMH-BH and DD divisions to ensure that youth with the most significant disabilities are receiving extended services.

MVR provides SE on-the-job supports for individuals with most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, utilizing Title VI funding after job placement. Upon expending those funds, MVR taps into Title I funds to provide SE services that lead up to job placement, such as

- discovery and exploration;
- provision of long-term, extended services support with the client or employer a minimum of twice per month; and
- customized employment (CE) for individuals and employers.

In a pilot project, MVR is partnering with DMH-DD to deliver CE services that promote specific abilities of individuals with disabilities and meets employers' needs through flexible strategies.

MVR contracts with the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston to develop a plan for expanding CE services across Missouri. ICI is providing three years of capacity-building training and technical assistance (TA) with CE. This assistance will help MVR develop and implement a training plan with VR staff, CRPs, DMH-DD service providers, and targeted case management entities. MVR will build and enhance partnerships between DMH-DD, their providers, CRPs, and school districts to maximize competitive integrated employment for youths and adults with disabilities.

MVR works with DMH-BH to provide the SE services of Individual Placement with Supports (IPS) for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. Missouri has 34 Community Mental Health Centers participating in this implementation collaborative. DMH and MVR are implementing IPS for youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

Proactive strategies developed to mitigate additional identified barriers to SE services are listed below.

MVR provides interpreters and CART services for the deaf/hard of hearing, as well as interpreters for individuals with language barriers.

There are 23 ADA compliant MVR offices providing statewide coverage. Lack of transportation and broadband accessibility create barriers. Vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) meet clients where they are whether that is in-home or at a convenient location for the client. They can also meet at a Missouri Job Center where some VRCs are housed for client convenience. The job centers are physically accessible. To address transportation barriers, VR offices work with local transportation providers, such as OATS, and with partner agencies that may be able to assist.

For individuals unable to meet in person, MVR offers virtual service delivery including online self-referrals and video conferencing.

MVR offers a variety of rehabilitation technology services, assistive devices, and equipment to individuals who need assistance to increase, maintain, or improve their functional capabilities, including mobility. MVR's statewide rehabilitation technology specialists provide technical assistance to counselors to better serve individuals with functional limitations. MVR has a cooperative agreement with Missouri Assistive Technology that provides a plan for the coordination of services; for using the resources of the cooperating agencies to the best advantage; to provide information sharing, technical support and training; to facilitate the referral of potential eligible individuals between agencies; and to jointly serve eligible individuals in obtaining rehabilitation technology services.

MVR is part of the Reentry 2030 initiative that is designed to improve reentry success for individuals on probation or parole. MVR refers individuals to other agencies or local organizations that can assist with housing. To address multiple barriers, MVR offices have a list of local resources to share with individuals.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State

applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

MVR currently utilizes all methods listed above on a continuous basis. The CE expansion program is based on a three-year timeline listed below.

Year one (2024) – planning, which includes developing curriculum, policy, and provider requirements

Year two (2025) – roll out training and implementation

Year three (2026) – continue to roll out while providing TA and maintaining previous sites

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION - Rehab Services for the Blind

Program-Specific Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

(a) State Rehabilitation Council. All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has (select A or B):

[check box] (A) is an independent State commission.

[check box] (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with Assurance 3(b), please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number / Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1st Term	August 2023
Parent Training and Information Center	1st Term	May 2023
Client Assistance Program *	1st Term	
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency) *	1st Term	
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider *	1st Term	
Business, Industry, and Labor *	1st Term	
Business, Industry, and Labor	2nd Term	August 2023
Business, Industry, and Labor*	1st term	

Business, Industry, and Labor	Vacant	
Disability Advocacy Groups	2nd Term	December 2011
Disability Advocacy Groups *	1st Term	
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	2nd Term	September 2023
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	N/A	
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	2nd Term	September 2023
State Workforce Development Board	1st Term	May 2023
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)	Always	August 2023
At least one representative of an individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing himself or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent himself or herself. 361.17(b)(3)(ii)B *		

If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

[text box]

Note that asterisks on the table above reflect individuals that are awaiting appointment to the SRC. RSB has consulted with the SRC regarding the composition requirements to ensure that the council is meeting the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act. The SRC has identified potential members for all vacancies and are awaiting appointment from the appointing authority. RSB is exploring ways to inform the public and potential stakeholders of SRC activities such as the SRC Public Forum and Business Meetings. This includes the potential use of Social Media outlets. In addition, RSB has beta tested the use of video conferencing software as a way to facilitate participation in both the SRC Public Forum and the SRC Business Meetings.

In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.
[text box]

The RSB sought feedback from the SRC's Programs and Policy subcommittee on the state plan. The state plan goals and priorities for PY 2020 and PY 2021 and the mid-plan modifications for PY 2022 and PY 2023 were jointly developed and agreed by RSB and the SRC.

The SRC receives the consumer satisfaction survey results at each of the quarterly meetings. RSB responds to SRC council member's feedback and questions generated by the SRC's review of the survey results.

Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.
[text box: List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response]

- The council recommended and RSB agreed to use public eye screening events to promote and recruit individuals for VR services. RSB presented to the council about client recruitment efforts. This includes the implementation of the Client Recruitment Team (CRT) started in January 2022. The CRT is charged with developing case finding strategies to improve overall outreach regarding RSB's programs and services. The council was informed that Prevention of Blindness (POB) Program's "Glaucoma Screenings" have been replaced with a more comprehensive vision screening tool. POB and CRT have provided outreach throughout the state in various venues including discrete vision screening services, and with employers as part of their health initiatives. POB has recently presented to and begun working with Local Public Health Agencies (LPHAs) to provide further outreach and education at their local health fairs and has provided discrete vision screening events at their health centers.
- The council recommended full and continued use of the electronic system to accept referrals for VR services due to an increased rate in total numbers and

RSB response in the first three months. The option for electronic referrals has allowed for easier processing of referrals. The Electronic Referral form went live in April 2022.

- The SRC has provided input on improving survey participation rates and survey procedure. The suggestions included providing surveys immediately upon case closure. They provided input on expanding options for completion of the surveys such as the phone, and suggested an incentive for those who complete the surveys. RSB rejected recommendation for an incentive. Monetary incentives are not an allowable expense.
- The SRC recommended updating the client satisfaction survey questions. The survey was reviewed by the SRC Evaluations committee and suggested updates implemented by RSB.
- The SRC worked with RSB to review and update their by-laws to be consistent with the WIOA requirements and the Technical Assistance Circular TAC-23-02. Changes were voted on and approved by the SRC.
- The SRC provided support and guidance on the creation and implementation of an onboarding training system for new RSB team members.
- The SRC provided support and guidance when selecting an Impartial Hearing Officer. The board approved RSB moving forward with the process to approve a new applicant.

(b) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

(1) The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:

(A) Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) works cooperatively with the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC), and regularly assesses the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with visual disabilities as part of its state and strategic planning process. This results in a comprehensive summary of the data to ascertain the needs of individuals with vision disabilities throughout the state. The most recent triennial assessment covers the period of PY 2019-PY 2021. Conclusions and recommendations of this assessment are incorporated into RSB goals and priorities.

Vocational Rehabilitation clients served in PY-2022 was 1,215, during PY-2023 it was 1,155, and for PY-2024, 1,149 clients were served. The average length of time on service from opening to closure in PY-2021 was at 1,298 days. PY-2022's 1,113 days was the average time from opening client cases to case closure. A similar trend continued in PY-2023 and PY-2024 which were 1021 days and 1122 days respectively. Rehabilitation Services for the Blind is not in an order of selection. RSB projects that funding for the 2024 and 2025 PY will meet the needs of all individuals who apply for services.

Meanwhile, analysis of the SRC's client satisfaction survey indicates RBS's ability to meet client needs. In PY 2021 the satisfaction rate was 87% with an 11% return rate. For PY 2022 the return rate was 12% with an 89% satisfaction rate. That number increased to 20% return rate in PY 2023 and increased the satisfaction rate to 92.6%.

RSB provides services to individuals who have a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits three or more functional capacities and fall into the category of Most Significantly Disabled. If through comprehensive assessment individual's needs for additional supports are identified to gain or maintain competitive-integrated employment, then Supported Employment services are provided to obtain employment.

Employment services and Supported Employment are provided through RSB's vocational counselors and may also be provided through contracted CRPs. RSB maintains contracts with 10 Community Rehabilitation Providers offering community employment services including Supported Employment Services to the most significantly disabled. Services include community based vocational assessments, job development, job coaching, and extended support services.

The number of individuals who will receive services with funds provided under the Supported Employment Program of the Act is estimated to be 29 for PY 2022 and 29 for PY 2023. RSB considers the current programs for community rehabilitation within the state as being sufficient to meet the current need.

(B) Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

RSB consistently advocates to extend quality services to the unserved and underserved.

RSB's vocational rehabilitation program serves a higher percentage of minorities than is in Missouri's general population. For example, the percent of African Americans served in the RSB vocational rehabilitation program triples that of the general population 31.59% to 10.8% in 2024. However, RSB's total served in the VR program for those reporting Hispanic heritage 1.74% in 2024 compared to 4.6% in the general population.

The percent of successful closures that are in the Hispanic population was 2.61% in PY 2023 and 3.16 in PY 2024. The percent of successful closures that are of the African American population is 22.88 in PY 2023 and 29.11 in PY 2024.

Minority income has increased from \$538.38 in PY 2022 to \$570.20 in PY 2023 and \$657.94 in PY 2024. This differs to the income of non-minority individuals whose income was \$728.14 in PY 2022, \$689.53 in PY 2023, and climbed back up to \$746.42 in PY 2024.

RSB contracts with the Helen Keller National Center to provide comprehensive personal and vocational adjustment services to individuals who are deaf-blind. RSB identified 19 individuals who received vocational rehabilitation services with dual diagnosis of vision and hearing loss PY 2022. In PY 2023 and PY 24 the number of deaf-blind individuals receiving RSB services was 22 and 23 respectively.

RSB's policies and practices have fared well in serving the population of women in vocational rehabilitation programs. Women made up 49.70% and 48.39 in PY 2023 and PY 2024. Women accounted for 56.21% of successful VR closures in 2023 and 46.84% of successful closures in PY 2024. The average earnings for women in PY 2023 and PY 2024 was \$583.92 and 631.57.

(C) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

Needs identified through other components of the statewide workforce development system include:

- Increase knowledge of services offered across core partner agencies and how to connect with those services.
- Utilize a combined approach in the provision of services for apprenticeships.
- Accessibility of Job Center resources for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

RSB's Job Development staff have continued to work with Job Center staff. In turn, RSB can learn about various WDB services and programs. RSB provides job center staff with training on topics including blindness awareness, the RSB referral process, and the RSB programs and services. Further support to the local job centers is provided through individual vocational counselors and supervisor visits. When possible RSB staff provide on-demand training for job center staff. The purpose is to strengthen the partnership and encourage the joint delivery of services across agencies.

RSB staff remain in communication with WDB and Job Center staff in various stakeholder meetings. RSB participates in the monthly Missouri Job Center Connect Statewide partnership meeting with all WIOA partners to discuss services, performance, and provide agency updates. RSB Job Development staff also participate in seven Regional Employment Nexus groups to collaborate with our Workforce Development partners. In addition, the Missouri Workforce Development Board (MOWDB) provides representation on the SRC for the blind. This provides RSB an opportunity to educate the MOWDB team regarding RSB services and capabilities of the population served.

An area to be strengthened is the accessibility of Job Center resources for individuals who are blind and visually impaired. RSB executive staff have provided insight into this concern and are involved with multiple WIOA committees, the MAWD (Missouri Association for Workforce Development), and the Statewide Workforce Development Board. RSB staff have continued to provide assistive technology training to Job Center staff. RSB Job Development staff currently meet regularly with Workforce staff regarding making available apprenticeship programs more inclusive. In addition, RSB Job Development staff worked with the workforce partners to help make their fliers and social media more accessible for blind and visually impaired job seekers. RSB offers each local board technology assessments to help with accessibility solutions for blind and visually impaired individuals. This includes software assessments, software updating, and uninstalling old software. Additionally, training was provided to staff on how to access the assistive software. Job Center staff have also been provided training in basic sighted guide techniques to assist blind or visually impaired patrons.

Other sources of potential clients include those that receive benefits of Missouri's Blind Pension and Supplemental Aid for the Blind programs. Blind Pension (BP)/Supplemental Aid for the Blind (SAB): BP average monthly caseload for PY-2021

was 2,605, in PY-2022 it was 2,474 and PY-2023 was 2,364. Meanwhile SAB caseload sizes in PY 2021, 2022, and 2023 were 1,042, 1,001, and 895 respectively. RSB receives monthly referrals for all individuals who have applied and been found eligible for Supplemental Aid to the Blind (SAB) and the Blind Pension (BP) Program. This organizational structure affords RSB access to Medicaid eligibility and services in the determination and utilization of comparable services and benefits.

RSB will continue working with all partners to develop innovative programs that serve common clients, to develop new ways to provide job creation, and to work cooperatively towards removing the stigma associated with having individuals with disabilities in the workplace. Improved common work needs assessments and referral processes to appropriate agencies will assist in the provision of services and success of clients served.

(D) Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.

RSB garners information regarding youth and students with disabilities from a variety of sources. One such source is the Blind Literacy Report. In the 2023-2024 school PY-2023 year 200 Students with Disabilities, ages 14-21, were identified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Of those Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provided transition services to 262 Students with Disabilities, with 166 receiving one or more of the five required pre-employment transition services. Examples include opportunities to participate in Work Based Learning Experiences to get hands on training in a real-world environment with compensation of at least minimum wage, instruction in self advocacy, job exploration and workplace readiness training.

RSB Rehabilitation Teachers and Orientation and Mobility Instructors provided in house training and services. The needs addressed include activities of daily living and alternative techniques of blindness such as orientation and mobility for travel purposes. In addition, services such as Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments, Rehabilitation technology, College/University training, Vocational, on-the job training, basic academic remedial or literary training and specific job readiness training are provided.

RSB participation in the IEP planning process allows RSB staff to coordinate and compliment the provision of VR services for eligible and potentially eligible students and services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Services are provided in accordance with the interagency MOU with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that outlines services, responsibilities, and financial obligations for each party.

The joint referral process, in accordance with Missouri Law, between RSB and the local educational authorities provides additional opportunity for LEA and RSB staff to ensure that youth and students are informed of services available to them. In accordance with the law parents must be informed of RSB services but may refuse to have their child referred to RSB for services.

(2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

RSB contracts with four community rehabilitation programs that offer comprehensive personal vocational adjustment services. Three of the four offer onsite residential services and one utilizes offsite residential settings. Neither of the four have a waiting list which shows that services are available to meet the demand for blindness-specific services in the state. Review of current services offered by one in-state vendor did result in a significant change to their College Preparation Program to serve Students with a disability. The program was expanded to start earlier in the high school years and to offer a virtual option for college exploration activities. One of the CRP's have added two new virtual pre-employment transition services, Job Exploration and Counseling on Post-Secondary Enrollment. These new services expand the reach to rural students and those who are unable to travel for in-person services.

In addition to these programs, RSB has a service agreement with the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults.

Further RSB maintains contracts with 10 Community Rehabilitation Providers that offer community employment services including Supported Employment Services to the most significantly disabled. Several of these community contract providers cover multiple districts throughout the state.

(c) Goals, Priorities, and Strategies. Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

(1) Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions;

The goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC) following review of the comprehensive needs assessment referenced in Section (B). The SRC further reviews the goals and priorities as part of the State Plan review process. Satisfaction survey results are also used to help determine potential needs.

(2) Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—

(A) Support innovation and expansion activities;

RSB supports innovation and expansion by providing support for the State Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council. RSB provides funding that enables each council to carry out their functions. RSB provides funding support for, council members' travel, supplies, as well as meeting expenses. The SRC Public Forum provides a public speaker and serves as a venue to discuss RSB programs, services, new and emergent in the local area and statewide. It is also an opportunity to provide feedback on ways to improve the provision of services.

(B) *Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;*

Reduce processing time of moving individuals from application to services as quickly as possible by determining what/where delays occur and what can change to improve the time frames. RSB has implemented DocuSign which has enabled applications to be

processed more quickly. RSB's Ticket Tracker project replaces the manual tracking and claim submission process to request cost reimbursements from the Social Security Administration. Ticket tracker will increase RSB's claim capture rate which will result in increased revenue for agency programs such as the Older Blind Services and Independent Living Programs.

RSB is always looking to improve services to individuals with disabilities that are also members of identified minority groups or that have been traditionally unserved or underserved. To address that need RSB created the Client Recruitment Team CRT whose charge was to increase the overall client census. The CRT came up with ideas for engaging medical professionals, and other community stakeholders. This includes outreach various venues, which includes working with entities that may not be aware of RSB's programs and services. The CRT also developed an informational flyer presented to stakeholders to inform them of what type of individual could be a referral for RSB services.

RSB consistently advocates to extend quality services to the unserved and underserved. RSB provides blindness awareness training to intra-departmental stakeholders across programs. RSB has provided consultation on whether departmental/divisional forms or documents are accessible or how to improve accessibility.

RSB will look to provide information to internal stakeholders within the Family Support Division. This includes the participation in the "FSD Communications Group" with the goal of increasing divisional knowledge of issues related to blindness and visual impairment. Participation would also serve to provide information to divisional staff about RSB's programs and services. Additionally, the Prevention of Blindness Program has provided vision screenings and outreach throughout the state to the Missouri Child Support Education Association to bring information and awareness regarding RSB Programs and Services that may benefit families of blind or visually children. POB has provided vision screenings and outreach at the Leadership Conference to educate the various program leaders of RSB Programs and Services.

RSB provides blindness awareness training to external stakeholders including awareness of assistive and adaptive technology. RSB's Program Development Specialist provides training in assistive technology directly to Job Centers. In addition to blindness awareness training, the training also provides information regarding the RSB referral process, and the RSB programs and services available to our dual customer base.

(C) Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post-secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and

Continue to engage schools and participate in the IEP planning process and coordinate the provision of VR services and pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities in accordance with IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

- Use of the Client Recruitment Team to create opportunities to reach out to schools, colleges and universities, parents, students, advocacy groups, and other service providers on the availability of services for students with disabilities.
- Utilize the RSB Children's Services program in identification of potentially eligible students with disabilities.
- Continue to participate in statewide initiatives developed to enhance transition services, such as the Missouri Blind Task Force and the Missouri Interagency Transition Team.
- Expand opportunities for work based learning experiences, including group opportunities, offered year-round to students with disabilities.
- Expand training opportunities for training in workplace readiness activities and services for students with disabilities.

(D) Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.
[text box: List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority]

Goal 1: Stabilize the downward trend in new applicants to 390 in PY 2024.

Baseline data:

The number of applicants in PY 2021 had climbed back up to 356 and increased again in PY-2022 to 372 new applicants. The number of applicants in PY-2023 was 302 and increased to 334 in PY-2024.

1. Continue to stabilize the average number served per year per caseload from the current 104 cases per counselor through efforts to address cases stalled without action and cases where contact has been lost and all reasonable efforts to reestablish contact has been done.
2. Establish and implement minimum standards for frequency of client contact and measure that through regular and annual case reviews.
3. Each district office will be responsible for analyzing where referrals are coming from and target outreach efforts to major stakeholders and other environments where they may encounter blind or visually impaired individuals absent from the database.
4. Utilize an online referral process to increase entry pathways to RSB services across all programs.

Goal 2: Improve employment outcomes to enhance economic stability and self-sufficiency for clients who exit the VR program.

Baseline data:

PY-21 saw 181 successful VR closures and average wages of \$19.94 per hour with annual average of \$34,052.64. In PY-22 RSB closed 183 successful closures with average wages of \$22.23 per hour and average annual earnings of \$35,403.06. PY-23 RSB successfully closed 153 individuals who had an average annual income of \$34,311.27 annually and \$21.63 in hourly wages. While in PY 24 that number went up to 158 closed successfully, and \$37,328.74, and \$22.69 in annual and hourly income.

1. Continue the Counselor Academy training every two years to ensure that RSB staff receive continuous, up-to-date, job specific training and skills enhancement.
2. Develop a counselor focus group to allow counselors to communicate and share information, solve problems, improve performance, build teamwork, and move projects forward. The focus groups will be led by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and will have the RSB Director present to offer expertise and guidance as needed.
3. Continue to monitor and emphasize the data points of percent of new applicants who are unemployed at application and use of low incident placement strategies such as on-the-job training, supported employment, work experience, and targeted job placement.

4. Continue, at IPE, to emphasize learning appropriate alternative techniques of blindness critical to successful employment, such as orientation and mobility skills; alternative skills of blindness to access, store and retrieve print information; and personal care skills.
5. Develop and improve coordination and collaboration, and participation with core partners and local Workforce Development Boards to braid services and assist clients in obtaining employment consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities.
6. Enhance employer engagement activities to increase employer services and recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting individuals with disabilities.

Goal 3: Develop and streamline the VR service delivery system to maintain consistency with WIOA requirements and improve the quality, timeliness, and effectiveness in the provision of services.

Baseline Data: In PY-2021 at 1,298 days, and PY-2022's 1,113 days was the average time from opening client cases to case closure. A similar trend continued in PY-2023 and PY-2024 which were 1021 days and 1122 days respectively.

1. Continue to update and provide high quality staff training and support on implementation of WIOA, effective case service processes, and skills necessary to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.
2. Continue to update and adjust the annual case record review process that allows for improved staff training based on case review findings, consistent and collaborative approaches to improving delivery systems, and continuous adherence to WIOA requirements.
3. Monitor movement through case and service status to ensure appropriate and timely case progression.
4. Increase likelihood for success through the use rapid engagement strategies to determine what/where delays occur. Determine what changes can be made to move individuals who have applied for services to receiving services as quickly as possible.

Goal 4: Increase the total number of individuals receiving pre-employment transition services to 200 in PY 2024.

Baseline data: In PY-2022 the total number of individuals receiving pre-employment transition services was 154. In PY-2023 the number of PETS individuals receiving services was at 156. While in PY-2024 the number of individuals receiving pre-employment transition services rose back up to 163.

1. Expand training for District Supervisors, Counselors, and Pre-Employment Transition Staff on the resource guide and provision of transition services.
2. Expand the use of Work Based Learning Experiences for those clients in school by increasing the number of vendors as needed, training staff to use Work Based Learning and improving the vendors' capacity to serve blind and visually impaired clients more appropriately and consistently through RSB—provided materials.
3. Expand client and family awareness of the opportunity for work experiences through use of the toolkit and related resources as early as possible, via Pre-Employment Transition staff and Counselors.
4. Determine ways to inform family members of the benefits of Competitive Integrated Employment. (CEI) and how RSB services tie into attainment of jobs and careers.
5. Expand outreach and services to rural areas.

(d) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals.

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

(1) Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs;

[text box: List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies]

Goal 1: Stabilize the downward trend in new applicants to 390 in PY 2024. This goal is ongoing and not yet complete.

The number of applicants in PY 2021 had climbed back up to 356 and increased again in PY-2022 to 372 new applicants. The number of applicants in PY-2023 was 302 and increased to 334 in PY-2024.

1. Continue to stabilize the average number served per year per caseload from the current 104 cases per counselor through efforts to address cases stalled in status 24 without action and cases where contact has been lost and all reasonable efforts to reestablish contact has been done.

RSB recognizes that high average caseload sizes can be a disincentive to case finding. In March of 2022 RSB used redistricting to redistribute caseload sizes as well. This

resulted in a more balanced average caseload size. RSB caseload sizes continued to drop to an average size of 78 in PY-21 and again to 71 in PY-22. In PY-24 the average caseload size is 68.

2. Establish and implement minimum standards for frequency of client contact and measure that through regular and annual case reviews.

RSB continues to provide training and feedback at the Counselor Academy training, and via the case review process. RSB has provided staff with written guidance on the good practices of case narration to ensure that staff continue to meet documentation standards for frequency of contact. Prior to implementation, the frequency of contact exceeding 6 months was at 20%. Following implementation, the contact frequency beyond 6 months dropped to 2 percent by September of 2021. The number dropped even further by September of 2025, down to 1.3%.

3. Each district office will be responsible for analyzing where referrals are coming from and target outreach efforts to major stakeholders and other environments where staff are likely to encounter blind or visually impaired individuals.

RSB's Client Recruitment Team, whose charge is to increase the number of referrals and applications into the VR Program, has coordinated with offices on the various avenues for outreach and case finding efforts. In PY-2024 642 individuals were provided vision screenings at 113 outreach events.

Goal 2: Improve employment outcomes to enhance economic stability and self-sufficiency for clients who exit the VR program. This goal is ongoing and not yet complete.

PY-21 saw 181 successful VR closures and average wages of \$19.94 per hour with annual average of \$34,052.64. In PY-22 RSB closed 183 successful closures with average wages of \$22.23 per hour and average annual earnings of \$35,403.06. PY-23 RSB successfully closed 153 individuals who had an average annual income of \$34,311.27 annually and \$21.63 in hourly wages. While in PY 24 that number went up to 158 closed successfully, and \$37,328.74, and \$22.69 in annual and hourly income.

1. Continue the Counselor Academy training every two years to ensure that RSB staff receive continuous, up-to-date, job specific training and skills enhancement.

RSB Counselor Academy training is coordinated by the Training and Special Projects Coordinator. Agenda topics are based upon data from RSB Dashboards, case reviews,

counselor feedback, client survey data, and emerging trends in blindness rehabilitation. Counselor Academies are held biannually.

2. Develop a counselor focus group to allow counselors to communicate and share information, solve problems, improve performance, build teamwork, and move projects forward. The focus groups will be led by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and will have the RSB Director present to offer expertise and guidance as needed.

RSB developed a counselor focus group in PY-2020 and continues on a regular basis. Valuable feedback is shared between counselors.

3. Continue to monitor and emphasize the data points of percent of new applicants who are unemployed at application and use of low incident placement strategies such as on-the-job training, supported employment, work experience, and targeted job placement.

RSB has a cooperative agreement with Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to jointly serve deaf-blind clients. Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) joined in a pilot project with MVR, Department of Mental Health (DMH), and Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP's) to expand customized employment opportunities for Missourians with disabilities. RSB has participated in benefits planning training including a Tiered Benefits' Planning system designed to provide professional staff with knowledge of available benefits, and how benefits are affected by work.

4. Continue to emphasize learning appropriate alternative techniques of blindness critical to successful employment, such as orientation and mobility skills; alternative skills of blindness to access, store, and retrieve print information; and personal care skills.

Alternative skills of blindness are critical to the success of all RSB's blind and visually impaired clients. RSB has continued to provide for training and support to staff that provide these alternative daily living skills. This includes the Rehabilitation Teacher Focus Group, training, and mentorship of staff.

5. Develop and improve coordination and collaboration with core partners and local Workforce Development Boards to braid services and assist clients in obtaining employment consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities.

RSB District Supervisors regularly attend Workforce Development Board Meetings. RSB executive staff meet with MVR quarterly to identify opportunities to partner and/or

enhance service provisions. RSB executive staff are involved with multiple WIOA committees and has a representative on the MAWD (Missouri Association for Workforce Development).

Partnerships with the job centers' "Business Services" has allowed RSB to expand employer outreach and to attain local job market trends. RSB has partnered with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to have informational meetings with all job centers across the state on services offered and how to partner for common clients.

6. Enhance employer engagement activities to increase employer services and recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting individuals with disabilities.

Job Development Specialists work closely with RSB staff and students to develop Work-Based Learning Experiences that align with their interests. Employers are encouraged to utilize current hiring practices with students, such as requiring an application and an interview before hiring. Students are provided training for the hiring and onboarding process. RSB's Job Development unit is developing a Virtual Job Club focused on employment related educational content and real-time job market information.

RSB staff cooperated with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to provide services to The Boeing Company for its "NeuroDiversity At Work Program". Much of the training came from the Windmills series of trainings designed to help employers **become more inclusive of individuals with disabilities in the workplace**. In addition, RSB provided several trainings such as: Sighted Guide, Assistive Technology/Accommodations (including screen readers), and other employment skills used by RSB clients.

Goal 3: Develop and streamline the VR service delivery system to maintain consistency with WIOA requirements and improve the quality, timeliness, and effectiveness in the provision of services. This goal is ongoing and not yet complete.

PY-2021 at 1,298 days, and PY-2022's 1,113 days was the average time from opening client cases to case closure. A similar trend continued in PY-2023 and PY-2024 which were 1021 days and 1122 days respectively.

1. Update administrative rule and continuously update policy manuals based on federal guidance and WIOA requirements.

The VR state administrative rule was updated in PY-21 and became effective July 30, 2021. It is WIOA compliant. All staff were required to review the policy manual updates.

2. Continue to update and provide high quality staff training and support on implementation of WIOA, effective case service processes, and skills necessary to ensure that personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Training and Special Projects Coordinator is dedicated to staff training and personnel development. This position created a new staff orientation training, and coordinates training sessions. Online staff training modules are continually updated to ensure personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force.

3. Continue to update and adjust the annual case record review process that allows for improved staff training based on case review findings, consistent and collaborative approaches to improving delivery systems, and continuous adherence to WIOA requirements.

The Analytics & Quality Assurance Manager, position created in PY-22, is dedicated to Quality Assurance, data analysis, reporting duties, and case reviews. RSB established a three-tier review process of District Supervisor's monthly case reviews, Assistant Deputy Director's monthly reviews, and finally, an annual review by the review team of administrative staff. Each district office and reviewers participate in a debrief to discuss case review results. Additionally, the district offices are provided a summary of case review results.

4. Enter into an agreement for State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) to access participating states wage record and employment verification information.

RSB is in the third year of this four-year strategy and will continue to make progress. The agreement has been signed. Although there is no interface as of this time, RSB can access the system as needed to access out of state wage data. RSB is evaluating the best options to begin using this wage data in the future.

Goal 4: Increase the total number of individuals receiving pre-employment transition services to 200 in PY 2024. This goal is ongoing and not yet complete.

In PY-2022 the total number of individuals receiving pre-employment transition services was 154. In PY-2023 the number of PETS individuals receiving services was at 156. While in PY-2024 the number of individuals receiving pre-employment transition services rose back up to 163.

This goal is ongoing and not yet complete.

1. Expand training for District Supervisors, Counselors, and Pre-Employment Transition Staff on the resource guide and provision of transition services.

In 2023 RSB implemented new onboarding plans for transition and CS staff. Onboarding for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors now includes modules on Pre-Employment Transition Services as well.

The Transition Services Coordinator conducts quarterly caseload reviews with the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and District Supervisors for all of the Students with a Disability. This allows opportunities for the coordinator to share information about programming and to “troubleshoot” cases. This includes training on the Pre-Employment Transition Guide and on areas of Pre-Employment Transition Services to increase awareness. RSB staff provide PETS services including job exploration counselling and instruction in self-advocacy.

2. Expand the use of Work Based Learning Experiences for those clients in school by increasing the number of vendors as needed, training staff to use Work Based Learning and improving the vendors’ capacity to serve blind and visually impaired clients more appropriately and consistently through RSB—provided materials.

Work-Based Learning Experiences are provided to get hands on training in a real-world environment with compensation of at least minimum wage. Training on the WBLE agreement and best practices is by the Transition Services Coordinator as part of the Counselor Academy, and additionally in the Counselor Focus Groups. Clients are further provided opportunities for workplace readiness training at PVA facilities. In the summer of 2025 RSB had provided for 30 WBLE’s combined between contracted WBLEs and direct employment WBLEs. Examples WBLE’s in a recreation center, library, farm, college or university, and the St. Louis Zoo.

3. Expand client and family awareness of the opportunity for work experiences through use of the toolkit and related resources as early as possible, via Pre-Employment Transition staff and Counselors.

Training on the WBLE agreement and best practices was provided by the Transition Services Coordinator as part of the Counselor Academy, and additionally in the Counselor Focus Groups.

4. Provide for opportunities to obtain Pre-Employment Transition services to clients in group settings.

RSB's the new contract with the NFB's Mission BEAM (Blindness Empowerment, Advocacy & Mentoring), signed in PY-2022 has led to quarterly workshops where clients work on skills to improve their workplace readiness skills, money management, clothing care and coordination, and cooking skills. The mentorship part of the Mission BEAM contract began in March 2025. Currently 3 youth clients are paired up with a NFB mentor. RSB coordinates with the Starkloff Disability Institute to fund clients for Dream Big camps.

RSB provides funding for clients to attend the Summer Orientation and Mobility and Adapted Living Resources (SOAR) program. Similarly, RSB provides for a weeklong workplace readiness training program to work on soft skills called Smart Social Navigation.

(2) Performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

The below performance data shows RSB's performance for the PY-2024 performance expectations.

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Actual Performance	PY 2024Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	63.2%	61.9%	66.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	56.7%	57.3%	63.7%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$6,901.99	\$5,676.00	\$5,676.00
Credential Attainment Rate	63.0%	45.0%	62.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	68.4%	75.2%	75.2
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable ¹

- (3) *The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).*

In PY-2024 RSB supported innovation and expansion activities by providing funding for the State Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council. Funding provided was necessary and sufficient for the Councils to carry out their functions, including members travel, supplies, and meeting expenses.

(e) Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

- (1) Acceptance of title VI funds:

(A) [X] VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

(B) [check box] VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

- (2) *If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of title VI funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.*

RSB provides Supported Employment services through the use of 10 contracted Supported Employment Service Providers (SESPs) located throughout the state. Supported employment services that may be purchased from SESP begin after job placement and include task analysis, and time-limited individual and group job coaching. **RSB expects to receive \$42,000 in Title VI funds for FFY 2024.** Title VI, Part B funds will only be used to purchase services through the contracted providers following evaluation identifying the client as being eligible for and in need of supported employment services. RSB will augment Title VI, Part B funds once those funds are exhausted.

A list of the contracted Supported Employment Service Providers and their main office locations are listed below:

- Alternative Community Training (ACT), Columbia, Missouri
- Alphapointe Association for the Blind, Kansas City, Missouri

- Community Living, Inc., St. Peters, Missouri
- Access II Independent Living Center, Gallatin, Missouri
- MERS Missouri Goodwill, St. Louis, Missouri
- Independence Center, St. Louis, Missouri
- Job Point, Columbia, Missouri
- Learning Opportunities/Quality Works, Inc., Monroe City, Missouri
- RISE Services Inc, St. Louis, Missouri
- Supported Living and Employment Services, Springfield, Missouri

(3) Supported employment services may be provided with title 1 or title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with section 101(a)(22) and section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.

Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, are afforded a full opportunity to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or re-enter competitive integrated employment, including supported employment. RSB will provide supported employment services following job placement to individuals and youth with the most significant disabilities, disabilities for up to 24 months. RSB will extend supported employment services, if necessary. WIOA permits DSU's to utilize the funds reserved for supported employment to provide extended services to youth with a disability for a period of 4 years, or until an individual turns 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth with a disability, whichever occurs first.

RSB supported employment services include assessment, job development, and task analysis. Time-limited individual and group job coaching leading to supported employment through 10 formal contracts with supported employment service providers are also available. Other services available to clients with a goal of supported employment are the same as those available to clients receiving services under Title I.

The transition to extended services occurs at the point job stabilization is reached. RSB defines "job stabilization" as follows: 1) employer satisfaction with productivity and social and work behaviors; 2) co-worker acceptance of the individual; 3) completion of training, adjustment and fading activities of the job coach; 4) IPE objectives have been met; and 5) the individual is suitably employed in competitive

integrated employment and is satisfied with the job.

- (4) *Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).*

RSB develops services agreements for supported employment services using the state contracting and procurement processes provided under the authority of an Expenditure Registration (ER101) authority issued to the Department by the State Office of Administration. The cooperative agreement for supported employment services is a binding contract between RSB and supported employment service providers and includes a statement to that effect. These contracts define the responsibilities of both the contractor and RSB in the referral of clients.

The contract specifies the requirements of the contractor in the provision of services, the expected outcomes, and the payment terms and conditions. This includes arranging for extended services, including natural supports. When a resource is not readily available through the contractor RSB assists the SESP in the development of natural supports away from the worksite and assists in locating funding for extended services.

RSB will continue to work closely with the Missouri Department of Social Services MO HealthNet Division and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DD) divisions to ensure that youth with the most significant disabilities receive extended services. Services may include:

- Job monitoring and assessment of employment stability
- Establishment of peer and natural support environments and,
- Coordination of specific services necessary to assist the individual to maintain employment.

In addition, RSB will work closely with the DMH-DD division to utilize home and community-based waivers to increase supported employment and extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities.

(f) Annual Estimates. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

(1) Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—

(A) VR Program; and

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
	1,149	1,170	\$14,759,335	

(B) Supported Employment Program.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
	29	29	\$42,000	

(g) Order of Selection.

[check box] The VR agency is **not** implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served. Check box will be checked to indicate NOT implementing an order of selection.

[check box] The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.

* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection. Check box will be checked to indicate NOT implementing an order of selection.

Pursuant to section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

(1) For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—

(A) The justification for the order;

[text box]

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind is not implementing an Order of Selection.

(B) The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

[text box]

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind is not implementing an Order of Selection.

(C) The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

[text box]

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind is not implementing an Order of Selection.

(2) Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?

[check box] No

[check box] No Will mark NO Rehabilitation Services for the Blind does not anticipate the need to establish an order of selection and continues to serve eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

(h) Waiver of Statewideness. *The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate “not applicable.”*

[text box]

Not Applicable.

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. *In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency’s comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:*

(1) Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—

- (A) The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;*
- (B) The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and*
- (C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.*

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs)	14	17	10
Rehabilitation Teachers	14	15	10
Orientation and Mobility Specialists	6	6	2
Job Development Specialists	3	4	2
Program Development Specialist	2	2	1
District Supervisors	5	6	1
Clerical Supervisors	6	6	2
Business Enterprise Area Supervisors	2	3	2
Children's Specialists	4	5	2
Rehabilitation Assistants	12	16	10
administrative and management staff	17	17	4

Currently RSB has 12 vacancies of 102 allotted FTE and anticipates 46 vacancies over the next 5 year period.

(D) *Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients: [text box]*
The number of clients served in PY-24 was 1,149 giving a ratio of 68:1.

(E) *Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years: [text box]*

RSB projects a client census over the next five years of 1500 which includes 29 individuals with significant disabilities.

(7) *Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:*

(A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Maryville University	Rehabilitation Counseling-Master of Arts	0	13

What was the state's only rehabilitation counseling program at Maryville University ended its Rehabilitation Counseling program in the fall 2024 semester. At that time the remaining graduates of the program received their Master's Degrees.

There were 13 Master's level students that graduated from Maryville during the past academic year. All the 13 students are eligible to take the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) test and also the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) test upon graduation. Individuals who have the credentials to receive the CRC are eligible for the Vocational Rehabilitation Trainee and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor positions. Individuals who receive the CRC are eligible for the Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position.

(B) The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Missouri DVR reports employing 137 Rehabilitation Counselors; RSB employs 17 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. The closure of the states only rehabilitation counseling program further reduces the number of qualified personnel specifically trained in rehabilitation counseling. There will be an insufficient number of in-state graduates available to meet the future needs of the state's public rehabilitation agencies. This necessitates widening RSB's recruiting focus to include graduates from other rehabilitation programs throughout the country, as well as graduates in other

disciplines. RSB does anticipate being able to hire qualified staff who have counseling, psychology, or social work degrees from other in-state universities.

RSB has developed a plan to present employment opportunities at RSB to a wider audience. Some of the components of that plan are:

- a. Continue to utilize the system of recruitment established by the Missouri State Division of Personnel. This system provides access to Uniform Classification and Pay System job descriptions and data regarding application for employment with the State of Missouri. These job descriptions and notices of vacancies can be found on-line at the MO Careers. MO Careers is also available to internal state employees who may also have experience;
- b. Send nationwide vacancy announcements to colleges and universities that offer academic programs in rehabilitation counseling, rehabilitation teaching, teacher of students with visual impairments, and orientation and mobility degrees;
- c. Utilize internet-based job lists of professional organizations, including National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB), Rehabnet, National Orientation and Mobility Certification (NOMC), Orientation and Mobility Listserv, Rehabilitation Counselor Listserv;
- d. Use consumer group posts such as NFB Missouri Listserv, MCB's Mo-Blind Listserv, and the Special Education Exchange.

Because the State of Missouri is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. All RSB's recruiting efforts listed in a-d above emphasize the importance of locating, interviewing and employing individuals who are from minority backgrounds or who have a disability.

(C) Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

- i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and*
- ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to*

the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Team members receive ongoing training specific to vocational rehabilitation and a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force. RSB has a dedicated intranet training website accessible to staff. The Employee Learning Center also houses some specific RSB training. RSB Training and Special Projects Coordinator provides staff with information regarding available and upcoming training topics. The Training and Special Projects Coordinator maintains RSB's dedicated internet website and ensures staff accessibility to online training materials. RSB staff are encouraged to submit training topics and ideas to management staff, which is reflected in the RSB Counselor Academy training topics.

RSB provides the following opportunities for staff to attain/retain expertise in their profession:

RSB has developed and regularly updates a training curriculum via a Training Resources page available for all new and existing personnel so that they are provided with the basic information needed to perform their jobs. These modules are also available to staff who feel that a refresher may be needed. Additional professional development is also available in training modules via the YesLMS site:

General Staff Training Plan:

RSB BASICS

Policy Manual: RSB Confidentiality Policy
RSB Organizational Structure
Introduction to RSB Training Resources
Do's and Don'ts When Interacting with a Person Who is Blind
History of Vocational Rehabilitation

AWARENESS OF BLINDNESS

NRTC Courses: Basics of Blindness and Low Vision
NRTC Courses: Introduction to Blindness and Low Vision
Sighted Guide Techniques

ETHICS AND COMMUNICATION

Establishing Ethical Boundaries
Encouraging Open and Positive Communication
Complexities of Ethical Thought

DSS recently released the Team Member Training Portal to allow staff to enter and track professional development opportunities not captured in the Movers, including training completed through MO Learning.

Additional training topics include:

Informed choice

Case management

Other disabilities and vision factors

Job development

Assistive technology

The Rehabilitation Act as amended by WIOA

Regulations implementing the Rehabilitation Act Amendments

Current research

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Required

Civil Rights and Cultural Diversity

HIPAA Privacy

Diseases of the eye

Assessment

Rehabilitation counseling and job development/placement

Client Assistance Program

Supported Employment

Self-Employment

Vocational Evaluation, and Placement manuals

Systemic Staff Training

RSB Managers and supervisors provide a systematic orientation and training curriculum to new staff in the area in which they will be employed and the clients they will serve.

RSB utilizes the mentor/mentee relationship to on-onboard new counselors. Central Office provides additional training to staff as necessary and as requested by local offices.

Staff are routinely informed and trained for any changes in legislation or regulation that would affect the service delivery systems.

RSB annually provides training opportunities for staff in topics applicable to job performance.

Upon their request, RSB allows subject matter experts to conduct seminars in emerging technology and software items at district offices.

The biannual RSB Counselor Academy is targeted training based on feedback from staff and case review results. Example topics include WIOA and implementing regulations, best practices in case management, small business planning and resources, assistive technology, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and performance indicators. Sessions have also included vocational rehabilitation processes, self-employment, AgrAbility, and training on the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) website.

RSB supports staff attendance at conferences, webinars, and seminars to the extent possible in order to broaden the scope of knowledge available to the staff. Staff have attended conferences such as:

- Governor's Conference on Economic Development
- Missouri Association of Workforce Development (MAWD)
- Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) Power-Up Conference and TAP training—Benefits Planning
- Business Enterprise Program national and regional conferences
- RSA hosted and sponsored national conferences
- National Federation of the Blind annual state conference
- Missouri Council of the Blind annual state conference
- Educational Education Advocacy and Law
- Association for Education and Rehabilitation conferences
- National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials
- Mid America Conference of Rehabilitation Teachers
- Children's Vision Summit
- Missouri Economic Research and Information Center training opportunities
- Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistant Centers" training opportunities
- Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation
- rogram Evaluation and Quality Assurance

RSB receives many periodicals regarding rehabilitation subjects. All publications are available to staff upon request, including:

- “The Vendorscope,” a publication of the Randolph Sheppard Vendors of America
- Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness
- Publications of the American Foundation for the Blind
- Publications of the National Federation of the Blind
- Publications of the American Council of the Blind
- Publications of Research and Training Centers throughout the country

Educational Leave

DSS may grant administrative leave to employees to pursue educational goals while continuing to work full-time for DSS. Employees may receive up to three (3) hours of administrative leave per week to attend approved classroom instruction held during the employee's normal work schedule.

RSB supports the attendance of staff members in graduate programs that would meet the criteria established in the standards, i.e., degrees in rehabilitation counseling, education counseling, social work or clinical psychology. RSB has provided for educational leave to support staff attendance to obtain certification in specializations such as Orientation and Mobility. RSB is currently developing an opportunity for a staff seeking to obtain a degree in Vision Rehabilitation Therapy. Additionally, RSB has provided support for staff working through the Vision Specialist Program with Mississippi State University.

(8) Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—

(A) Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

(B) The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Missouri Uniform Classification and Pay System for all RSB counselor positions are the highest standard in the state consistent with RSMO 337. All of RSB's counseling staff meets the existing standards. Rehabilitation Counselor positions are available in two tiers.

The first is a Rehabilitation Specialist (Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor) and requires one or more years of experience as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the Blind Trainee with the Missouri Uniform Classification and Pay System.

OR One or more years of experience as a Children's Specialist for the Blind or Rehabilitation Teacher for the Blind with the Missouri Uniform Classification and Pay System; and Possession of a Bachelor's or higher level degree with a minimum of 24 earned credit hours in one or a combination of the following: Counseling, Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling, Disability Studies, Human Resources, Business

Administration, Special Education, Psychology, or Social Work.

OR A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a minimum of 24 earned credit hours in one or a combination of the following: Counseling, Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling, Disability Studies, Human Resources, Business Administration, Special Education, Psychology, or Social Work; **and**, One or more years of professional experience providing services to and/or advocacy for individuals with disabilities. *_(A Master's degree from an accredited college or university in the specified fields may substitute for the stated experience.)* OR

Possession of a current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certification issued by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

The second tier is a Senior Rehabilitation Specialist (Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor) requires two or more years of experience as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the Blind with the Missouri Uniform Classification and Pay System.

OR A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a minimum of 24 earned credit hours in one or a combination of the following: Counseling, Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling, Disability Studies, Human Resources, Business Administration, Special Education, Psychology, or Social Work; **and**,

Three or more years of professional experience providing services to and/or advocacy for individuals with disabilities. *_(A Master's degree from an accredited college or university in the specified fields may substitute for one year of the stated experience.)*

OR

*** Experience Working with Blind or Visually Impaired Persons is preferred but not required***

Possession of a current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certification issued by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

All of RSB's vocational rehabilitation counseling staff currently meet the personnel requirements, which are consistent with 34 CFR 361.18. RSB will continue to coordinate with institutions offering graduate education in rehabilitation or related areas to ensure that classes are readily available, either in traditional programs or through use of the Internet and other non-traditional methodologies.

(9) Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

RSB utilizes staff with expertise in other languages and other modes of communication to work with clients with special communications needs in their district as needed. RSB has two bilingual staff, including Arabic, American Sign Language. RSB may utilize interpretive services via statewide preferred use contracts. This resource offers a selection of vendors for various service areas, which allows connection to skilled interpreters to facilitate verbal communications between RSB staff and clients.

RSB currently has one staff member who can communicate using sign language. In addition, RSB provides contracted sign language interpreters for all public meetings, hearings and forums upon request. TDD service is available at all RSB offices, either through on-site equipment or through Relay Missouri, a service of Missouri's Office of Administration.

RSB has the capability internally and through the Center for Braille and Narration Production at the Missouri State Prison to produce information in accessible media for staff and clients, including braille, large print, audio tape, and electronic formats. All information disseminated by the agency to staff with disabilities, as well as clients, is available in accessible media. In addition, 33.93 % of RSB's field staff providing direct client services can read at least Grade 1 Braille and 26.79% are proficient in and can teach Grade II Braille.

(10) As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

RSB Children's Specialists (CS) receive training in the Special Education section of RSB's Children's Services Manual. RSB provides opportunities for staff professional development internally via trainings offered through the YesLMS system. This includes training topics such as Common Children's Eye Conditions, Pre-Employment Transition Services, Overview of Assistive Technology, Introduction to Working with Individuals Who are Deaf-Blind, and other courses specific to children and transition age students. Additionally, the RSB Children's Specialists receive training from the Missouri Parents Act (MPACT) as well as participate in professional development with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Regional Professional Development Centers. CS staff also receive training on Individualized Education Plans and participate in IEP meetings as part of their initial training.

The Transition Services Coordinator conducts quarterly caseload reviews with the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and District Supervisors for all of the Students with a Disability. This includes training on the Pre-Employment Transition Guide and on

areas of Pre-Employment Transition Services to increase awareness. RSB staff provide PETS services including job exploration counselling and instruction in self-advocacy.

RSB staff are able access additional training, resource, and professional development activities through the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) to ensure that transition-age youth with disabilities receive high-quality education services.

RSB works with stakeholders to provide additional training and opportunities for collaboration. The cooperative agreement between DESE and Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) and RSB ensures joint planning of individualized educational plans and individualized plans for employment. This encourages full participation of students with visual disabilities in high school vocational education programs and experiences. This includes a Transition Handbook for the Cooperative Work Experience Program, jointly developed by the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and RSB staff, provides policy guidance on transition services. The handbook is available on the DESE website.

Similarly, a Transition Brochure on transition services, jointly developed by staff of the (DESE) and RSB, is available on DESE's website. It provides a single source for an overview of the transition services that are available from the state's two vocational rehabilitation agencies. The target audience includes students, parents, school personnel, and community organizations that might be in contact with individuals who could potentially benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.

RSB provides representation on the Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT) which promotes interagency collaboration in Missouri at the state level by establishing a group vision for improving outcomes for young adults with disabilities. MITT consists of diverse state-level members, including RSB, that meet quarterly to share resources, develop goals and promote activities to improve transition education, pre-employment transition services, and post—secondary outcomes. It holds the annual Summer Transition Institute to provide further information and resources to education and RSB personnel regarding matters affecting students with disabilities.

RSB also provides representation and consultation to the Blind Student Task Force. The charge of the task force is to advise the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on issues pertaining to children who are blind and visually impaired. RSB has appointment authority for one position on the Blind Student Task Force.

RSB will approach in-state universities such as Missouri State University (MSU).MSU operates the only graduate education program for Teachers of the Visually Impaired in the state. Initial discussions could be held regarding bridging the gap between academic and professional programs for blind and visually impaired.

RSB and MVR have developed and implemented a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with institutions of higher education (IHEs) in the state. This MOU outlines each entity's responsibilities in the delivery of adaptive equipment and technological aids and appliances for students with disabilities in colleges and universities throughout the state.

(j) Coordination with Education Officials. *In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—*

(1) Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.
[text box]

Coordination between the RSB and education officials responsible for the public education of students is conducted via a series of agreements and resources such as:

Interagency Cooperative Agreement:

The interagency cooperative agreement between Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) and the State Education Agency (SEA) outlines plans, policies, procedures, and the financial responsibility of each agency for the coordination of transition services to students with disabilities. The agreement, developed in accordance with IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, includes the following:

1. RSB to provide consultation and technical assistance to local and state educational staff in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
2. Transition planning by RSB staff and the educational agency that facilitates development of and completion of their individualized education programs in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA);
3. Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities of each agency and provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services, and;
4. Procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

The agreement contains guidance on the primary source of service provision including the educational agencies' financial responsibility in accordance with IDEA and RSB's agreement to pay for employment related transition services provided in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act as amended for vocational rehabilitation services beyond the scope of IDEA.

In addition, the agreement provides the means to ensure joint planning of individualized educational plans and individualized plans for employment. It includes the opportunity that students may receive “for credit” work experiences through the Cooperative Work Experience Program.

Joint Referral Process:

In accordance with 162.1139 Revised Statutes of Missouri for all children identified as visually impaired a joint referral process for local education agencies and RSB was established between the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind.

- The DESE State Plan for Special Education requires that school districts discuss RSB services annually at each student’s Individualized Educational Program meeting.
- RSB staff must refer any client that is not served through an IEP to the Division of Special Education with the parent’s consent.
- The Office of Special Education provides guidance documents and a referral form available online to the local education agencies for this process.
- RSB continues to offer local administrators of special education (LASE) and the DESE Missouri Blind Task group presentations on RSB transition services at their meetings.

Transition Handbook for the Cooperative Work Experience Program:

A Transition Handbook for the Cooperative Work Experience Program, jointly developed by the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and RSB staff, provides policy guidance on transition services. The handbook is available on the DESE website.

Transition Brochure:

A brochure on transition services, jointly developed by staff of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and RSB, is available on DESE’s website. It provides a single source for an overview of the technical assistance, consultation, and transition services that are available from the state’s two vocational rehabilitation agencies. The target audience includes students, parents, school personnel, and community organizations that might be in contact with individuals who could potentially benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.

Coordination with Missouri School for the Blind:

RSB provides MSB students with pre-employment transition services such as job research, self-advocacy, resume building and other activities. An example would be the

Work Based Learning Experiences provided by RSB in partnership with MSB, and the Center for Specialized Services (CSS).

(2) Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 CFR 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:

(A) Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;

The previously mentioned interagency cooperative agreement facilitates the coordination of transition services among RSB, the SEA and LEA's in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition and vocational rehabilitation services. RSB provides for consultation and services for pre-employment transition services such as job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for post-secondary education, workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy which may include peer mentoring.

Further information is provided for VR eligibility, and VR transition services. These include Vocational Rehabilitation services, postsecondary training programs, and connections to community agencies/resources that may be appropriate for transition planning. RSB can collaborate with the LEA to provide for work experience opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, and employer-driven skills training. RSB provides consultation and technical assistance to the Office of Special Education through active participation in the Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT) and the Missouri Blind Task Force. Individual consultation and technical assistance may be provided by RSB to LEA's and students with disabilities and/or their families during an IEP or 504 meeting, during a person-centered planning meeting when invited, etc. Consultation and technical assistance may occur in person, by conference call, video conferencing, or another agreed upon means.

(B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

Missouri students with disabilities receiving special education services in accordance with the IDEA are also required to receive transition services as part of their IEP beginning at age 16. If such services are determined appropriate by the student's IEP team, a student younger than 16 may receive transition services as part of the IEP. RSB may provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities beginning at the age of 14.

RSB participates in the facilitation and development of the IEP wherever possible. The student, LEA, IEP team and RSB jointly determine when and if pre-employment transition services are needed as well as when employment preparation should begin. If RSB is unable to attend in person, the LEA arranges an alternative means by which RSB can participate such as a conference call or video conferencing. For those students who have been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment is coordinated with the student's IEP goals and services. Unless an extension is agreed upon by the student or legal guardian development of the IPE must occur within 90 days of the eligibility determination. The IPE must be developed prior to the student exiting from high school.

(C) The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;

Plans, policies, procedures, and financial responsibilities of each party is specified via an interagency cooperative agreement. The parties to the agreement include the Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services (Vocational Rehabilitation), Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and the Office of Special Education and Office of Career Readiness.

The agreement further facilitates the coordination of transition services to students with disabilities. It contains guidance on the primary source of service provision including the educational agencies' financial responsibility for education related services. The agreement further defines RSB's agreement to pay for employment related transition services provided in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act.

Roles and responsibilities of qualified personnel who are responsible for transition services are also specified. This includes guidelines and procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services. The agreement also ensures joint planning of individualized educational plans and individualized plans

for employment. It provides opportunities for students to receive “for credit” work experiences through the Cooperative Work Experience Program.

(D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;

RSB counselors will provide outreach to and identification of students with visual disabilities in need of transition services. Students are not required to have an open vocational rehabilitation case to participate in outreach activities. RSB counselors and Children’s Specialists collaborate with local school districts and DESE to facilitate referral processes. RSB staff and school districts identify overlap in educational goals and services and determine financial responsibilities. RSB also utilizes community resources, such as local job fairs to disseminate program information. The Prevention of Blindness Program has provided vision screenings to high school students in the Department of Social Services High School Career Fair. POB provides vision screenings and outreach at back-to-school fairs. Through these collaborations and braiding of services, RSB increases outreach to students and improves student transition into employment.

VR and RSB outreach will inform education staff, students, and as appropriate, families, and other authorized representatives about the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, VR and RSB eligibility requirements, application procedures and the scope and services that may be provided to eligible individuals.

RSB advocates for early awareness of vocational rehabilitation services to minimize gaps from school to post-school activities. RSB is committed to outreach activities to facilitate pre-employment transition services designed to provide necessary supports for obtaining independence, post-secondary education, and employment. Examples of outreach activities include:

- Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT): The Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT) promotes interagency collaboration in Missouri at the state level by establishing a group vision for improving outcomes for young adults with disabilities. MITT consists of diverse state-level members, including RSB, that meet quarterly to share resources, develop goals and promote activities to improve transition education, pre-employment transition services, and post—

secondary outcomes. It holds the annual Summer Transition Institute to provide further information and resources to education and RSB personnel regarding matters affecting students with disabilities.

- Blind Task Force (House Bill 401): Members are appointed by the Commissioner of Education in cooperation with the department of Social Services and include an RSB staff person, education personnel, parents, blindness professionals, and representatives from blindness consumer groups. The purpose of the Blind Task Force is to develop goals and objectives to guide the improvement of special education, related services, vocational training, and transition from school to work, rehabilitation services, independent living and the employment outcomes for eligible blind or visually impaired students. Accomplishments of the Blind Task Force include:
 - The bi-annual Vision Summit for Parents and Educators of Children with Visual Impairment/Blindness. Topics focused on the provision of appropriate education services, accommodations, and pre-employment transition services for students who are blind or visually impaired.
 - The creation of a "Blindness Skills Specialist" position at each of the DESE Regional Professional Development Centers whose responsibilities include coordination of "services available from other entities who serve eligible students.". DESE has contracted with four specialists, one located at Truman State University in Kirksville, MO, and two located at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO, and one at the Missouri School for the Blind.
 - Submission of an annual reports from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to the Missouri Legislature. The report is to include the number of students with visual impairments receiving special education services who: 1) receive transition planning services with the cooperation of RSB as part of their Individual Education Plan; and 2) are referred to RSB.
 - Establishment of a joint referral system between the Division of Special Education in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and RSB.

(E) Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

Chapter 17 of the RSB Policy Manual "Extended Employment and limitations on the use of subminimum wage" provides RSB staff with guidelines on the required

documentation for consultation with students and youth who are seeking subminimum wage employment. RSB assigns a Central Office staff person responsible for coordinating with district offices upon becoming aware of any individual that seeks to obtain subminimum wage employment. Central office provides the required form documentation to district office staff. Completed forms are reviewed by the Central Office staff person prior to submission in accordance with RSB Chapter 17 and 34 CFR 397.31.

(F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

The interagency agreement specifies limits regarding students with disabilities seeking subminimum wage employment. The agreement specifies that students who seek to obtain subminimum wage employment are informed that neither RSB nor the SEA/LEA can provide services to obtain subminimum wage employment. Students are informed that vocational rehabilitation services are intended to achieve an employment outcome in a competitive-integrated employment setting. RSB informs the student that Vocational Rehabilitation Services are available should the applicant wish to pursue competitive-integrated employment. This includes the opportunity to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services. RSB provides information regarding RSB's Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

(k) Coordination with Employers. *In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.*

[text box]

Missouri is one of 22 states that have both a general VR agency (Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation-General) and services for the blind VR agency (Rehabilitation Services for the Blind). Each agency serves as equal partners for the vocational rehabilitation program. Research indicates that separate blind agencies, when compared to general/combined agencies, show higher quality services specific to the population (An Update on Services and Outcomes of Blind and Visually Impaired Consumers Served in Separate and General/Combined VR Agencies; Cavanaugh, 2010), resulting in better

trained clients ready for the 21st century workforce, higher competitive placement rates, and higher incomes at closure leading toward self-sufficiency for those individuals.

To facilitate the provision of VR services RSB works with employers through a variety of activities at the local level. This allows RSB to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities. RSB vocational rehabilitation counselors and job development specialist engages in outreach activities by meeting directly with employers. The direct meetings allow them to identify employment needs and educate employers about the services RSB can offer for their existing and new employees.

One of the ways that RSB has worked with employers is by providing vision screenings at Employee Heath Fairs. This includes employers such as Conagra and Scholastic. This provides greater opportunity to engage with potential employers while providing vision screenings to their staff as a win-win for all involved. Outreach activities also include job fairs, chamber of commerce events, lunch and learns, and participation in local Workforce Development Boards. Each district office and the Prevention of Blindness program has been equipped with vision screeners has been provided training on outreach and screening.

RSB continues to build out and improve its Job Development Program. The Job Development Team now consists of 4 Job Development Specialists and the Employment Services Coordinator. JDS staff provide information and training to employers and the local Workforce Development Boards. They also receive feedback beneficial to RSB clients looking for employment. Examples of feedback indicates employer views on employment skills such as soft skills, ensuring the proper credentials for jobs, and the importance of basic blindness and independent living skills for maintaining employment.

One example of RSB's collaboration with Job Centers is exhibited by their collaboration with the Job Centers on their use of Transfr, virtual reality (VR) goggles specifically geared toward career exploration. Using VR goggles users are able to perform specific job tasks/duties in various job roles such as manufacturing, hospitality, health care, welding, etc. RSB's Job Development unit has worked in conjunction with both Transfr and the Job Centers to assist in enhancing the accessibility of these devices. This allows clients with low vision to access the device. RSB feedback has been well received by both Transfr and the Job Centers resulting in improvements to the overall accessibility of these devices. Recent improvements in accessibility include increased font sizes of text, increased detail of audio descriptions within the simulations, hatching in certain areas of specific simulations (assist with color blindness), and more.

Job Development Specialists also represent RSB on the Nexus groups located throughout the state. Nexus is a collaboration of experienced employment service providers and local businesses working expand employment opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment. Job Development Specialists receives and distributes job postings to VR staff.

In addition to jobs with employers some RSB clients have an interest in self-employment. Clients interested in self-employment receive services and assistance in the development of business plans required for self-employment vocational goals. This includes RSB collaboration with Small Business Development Centers, SBDC's.

RSB has developed relationships with several employers across the state. By communicating directly with HR staff on employment needs RSB can identify employment opportunities, and provide, task analysis, and disability/blindness awareness and sensitivity training. Outreach activities have resulted in competitive integrated employment outcomes. Similarly, the relationships have resulted in work experience opportunities, both paid and unpaid, for youth and students with disabilities and adult clients.

In July of 2023, RSB's Job Development Unit began a partnership with Boeing to provide a seven-week training series to various high-level Boeing team members. This training series is based on the Windmills Training Program. RSB Job Development Specialists provided direct, onsite training to the Boeing team. The purpose of this training was to partner with the Boeing team to highlight the benefits of employing individuals with disabilities through various training exercises.

RSB has also developed relationships with other employers throughout the state such as Bass Pro Shop, O'Reilly Auto Parts), Coca-Cola, and Fed Ex. Most recently relationships with McLane, McKesson, Donaldson Co., HyVee, Chase Bank, Commerce Bank, and Amazon have been developed. Additionally, the RSB Job Development Unit is currently working the Mercy Hospital to develop an overarching On the Job Training contract for RSB clients interested in non-clinical positions.

RSB provides services for students and youth with disabilities. This includes pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities. RSB uses formal contract agreements with community rehabilitation providers. The purpose of the contracts is for the CRP's to provide services to clients for job search, job placement and customized employment opportunities. Other services include work-based learning experiences, task analysis, and job coaching when needed.

RSB Pre-Employment Transition Services contracts provide students with disabilities a foundation for the school-to-work transition through employment readiness skills instruction, including workplace readiness training, job exploration counseling, and self-advocacy training. In addition to employment readiness instruction the consumer experiences work-based learning for a period of up to sixteen weeks and 120 hours total. During this time the consumers receive on-the-job training and an hourly wage during their placement at a job site. Involvement in this program is intended to increase a consumer's career awareness, build marketable vocational skills, and support a healthy self-image.

For students with disabilities that have good foundational blindness skills RSB also provides the option of to participate in Work Based Learning Experiences directly with employers. Some examples include WBLE's in a recreation center, library, farm, college or university, and the St. Louis Zoo. Others included working in retail at a thrift store. RSB partners with Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) to provide a WBLE in collaboration with the RISE MSB provides the students and transportation for the program, RISE provides the WBLE itself, and RSB provides funding for the program. In some cases, the WBLE's have resulted in job offers for students. In the summer of 2025 RSB had provided for 30 WBLE's combined between contracted WBLEs and direct employment WBLES.

Other avenues utilized by RSB to coordinate with employers include:

National Employment Team (NET):

RSB's Employment Services Coordinator serves as the point of contact for the National Employment Team (NET). Through a national VR team that specializes in employer development, business consulting and corporate relations, the NET creates a coordinated approach to serving both business customers and VR clients through a dual customer approach. This allows RSB another avenue to meet the employment needs of qualified applicants and to provide additional supports to potential employers.

Talent Acquisition Portal:

The online Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) was built for to further connect VR candidates and businesses. TAP provides businesses with a national talent pool of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) candidates who are actively looking for employment. TAP is led by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation and the National Employment Team (NET) in partnership with disABLEDperson, Inc. Every RSB counselor and district supervisor has access to TAP and can invite any VR client to

enter their information into the system. Counselors can help the client enter information, edit résumés, and send job leads to clients.

Jobs.mo.gov:

RSB's clients can access jobs.mo.gov, a web-based employment resource for clients and employers maintained by the Division of Workforce Development. This site offers clients career planning and job exploration, self-assessment, and wage and trend data to analyze careers, trends, and growing occupations in Missouri. Clients can search for job orders and referral information from employers for job openings that meet their qualifications. Clients can access other job portals through this system, expanding the search outside of Missouri. Employers can also perform a job search for available applicants that match the skills for their specific employment needs and can access information on incentives, business resources, and recruitment.

Missouri Connections:

Missouri Connections provides interactive career exploration features. This includes information on educational options and degree choices after high school. Schools can upload course lists and customized career plans of study. Sponsored by DESE and the Department of Economic Development (DED), Missouri Connections is free of charge to students, parents, guidance counselors, educators, and job seekers. Through Missouri Connections, the Division of Workforce Development, under DED, Department of Higher Education, RSB and other WIOA core partners and local school districts can utilize the same career planning tool with their clients/students.

(I) Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies. *In accordance with the requirements in section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are **not** carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:*

- (1) State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;*

Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) is the state agency that carries out activities under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. RSB and MoAT collaborate to jointly serve eligible individuals and ensure maximum statewide utilization of services, expertise and knowledge within each agency and avoid duplication of services. MoAT does have representation on the SRC to assist in the coordination of activities.

Assistive technology is essential for the success of RSB clients. VR staff receive ongoing training and individual consultation in the advances and use of assistive

technology. RSB has an assistive technology specialist and coordinates with Missouri Assistive Technology, rehabilitation engineers and vendors to provide training and demonstrate advances in technology.

(2) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

The RSB Self-Employment Resource guide lists the USDA's Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service as one of the available programs to aid clients in making connections to programs that aid in business start-ups or operating a business.

Further information on USDA grants, loans, loan guarantees, and technical skill assistance may be provided through the Business and Industry Loan program. The loan program is aimed at encouraging development in rural areas to create or preserve employment opportunities there. The Technical Assistance program assists individual, businesses, and the community by dissemination and promotion of technical skills, people skills and personal skills knowledge.

RSB has a contractual relationship with the Missouri AgrAbility Project. AgrAbility is a Cooperative Extension Service through the University of Missouri, Columbia, administered by the USDA. Additionally, the RSB Job Development Unit has also developed a relationship with AgrAbility for clients interested in working in the agricultural field. The purpose is to provide training and assistance to people with disabilities employed in agricultural fields. AgrAbility conducts site visits, on-site assessments, technical assistance, and agriculture-based education. AgrAbility provides recommendations on processes and adaptations to assist RSB clients in achieving employment goals in the agriculture industry.

(3) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

RSB maintains contracts with 10 Community Rehabilitation Providers offering community employment services including Supported Employment Services to the most significantly disabled. Several of these community contract providers cover multiple districts. Providers work with employers and assist clients with job search, job placement and customized employment opportunities. Other services include work-based learning experiences, task analysis, and job coaching when needed. The relationships with these community rehabilitation programs are defined in State required contracts for service provision which specify the services to be provided, their duration, costs and reporting and billing requirements.

(4) State use contracting programs;

RSB does not participate in any state use contracting programs.

(5) State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

The Department of Social Services administers the MO HealthNet (Medicaid) program in Missouri. MO HealthNet provides information and reports to Rehabilitation Services for the Blind. RSB receives monthly referrals for all individuals who have applied and been found eligible for Supplemental Aid to the Blind (SAB) and the Blind Pension (BP) Program. This organizational structure affords RSB access to Medicaid eligibility and services in the determination and utilization of comparable services and benefits. MO HealthNet coverage is automatically available to recipients of the Missouri Supplemental Aid to the Blind (SAB) and Blind Pension (BP) programs.

(6) State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;

The Division of Developmental Disabilities currently administers four Medicaid Home and Community Based (HCB) Waiver programs delivering employment supports and services for individuals with intellectual or other developmental disabilities. The four waivers are the Comprehensive Waiver; Missouri Children with Developmental Disabilities Waiver; Community Support Waiver; and the Partnership for Hope Waiver. The partnership with DMH has resulted in a referral process between agencies that maximizes the availability of services to individuals with the most significant disabilities. A description of services available under each waiver can be found at <https://dmh.mo.gov/dev-disabilities/programs/waiver/medicaid-hcb>.

Division of Developmental Disabilities has a statewide employment initiative, Employment First, for working age citizens with disabilities. Employment services include job preparation, job discovery, and community employment in a competitive integrated work setting that may include ongoing supports. The Division of Behavioral Health provides employment services to individuals with mental illnesses, histories of substance abuse, and/or criminal backgrounds. RSB further collaborates with the Division of Developmental Disabilities through the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network, NEON.

Clinical and vocational employment services are integrated through state-wide partnerships to help individuals who are interested in employment participate in the competitive labor market with the appropriate level of supports and services to be successful. RSB partners with DMH-DD on the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) and is developing a tiered benefits planning training to

provide benefits counseling services to those in need. RSB will continue to partner and collaborate with DMH programs in the delivery of employment services.

(7) State agency responsible for providing mental health services;

The Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) is the state agency responsible for the provision of services to individuals with developmental disabilities and for providing mental health services. RSB collaborates with DMH to develop employment opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings for eligible clients.

Currently, RSB is developing an update to an interagency MOU between RSB and DMH. The purpose of the MOU will be to outline the collaborative working relationship for interagency planning and policy development, service delivery, and technical assistance. This collaborative effort is to increase participation of individuals with disabilities to enter into the competitive-integrated workforce by providing training and support to help build their individual strengths and achieve their career goals.

A collaborative effort to increase capacity of RSB and DMH staff resulted in Customized Employment training for both agencies and further included other partners and community rehabilitation programs throughout the state. The training ultimately produced a Customized Employment pilot program that started in 2019/2020. The CE pilot program is currently undergoing an evaluation and contract renewal process.

(8) Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and

Independent Living Centers

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) works closely with a wide variety of agencies and programs in coordinating the provision of vocational rehabilitation and client support services. Some of these relationships have been agreed to in written cooperative agreements, such as those with the 22 State Independent Living Centers that spells out referral procedures, coordination of services, and the technical assistance available from both entities; and the Missouri School for the Blind, which provides for joint referral and service coordination.

Pre-ETS. Services

RSB currently has 8 provider contracts with providers to provide prevocational skills training to students who are blind or visually impaired. RSB's Pre-Employment Transition Services contracts provide students with disabilities with a foundation for the school-to-work transition. The program provides community involvement, competitive

work experience to high school age youth, and enables students and youth greater independence skills through work and goal setting experiences.

This program consists of employment readiness skills instruction, including workplace readiness training, job exploration counseling and self-advocacy training. The program focuses on problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, communication, professionalism, and networking. In addition, the consumer is provided real world experiences via work-based learning for a period of up to sixteen weeks and 120 hours total. Consumers are placed at a job site where they receive on-the-job training and an hourly wage. The program helps to increase consumers 'career awareness, vocational skills, and builds self-confidence.

Community Rehabilitation Providers

RSB has formal contract agreements with community rehabilitation providers to work with employers and assist clients with job search, job placement and customized employment opportunities. Other services include work-based learning experiences, task analysis, and job coaching when needed. The relationships with these community rehabilitation programs are defined in State required contracts for service provision which specify the services to be provided, their duration, costs and reporting and billing requirements. Other services are predicated on working relationships for coordination of support services based on individual client needs at the local level, such as transportation, housing, recreation, supported employment extended services provided through the Department of Mental Health regional offices for individuals with developmental disabilities and Senate Bill 40 Boards (County Developmental Disability Services) and other local agencies involved in the provision of physical and mental rehabilitation.

Family Support Division Programs

A description of RSB services and procedures for referral from the Family Support Division (FSD) is specified in their Income Maintenance manual and, similarly, RSB policy requires referral of clients to the Family Support Division for determination of eligibility for Supplemental Aid to the Blind (SAB) or Blind Pension (BP). FSD refers all newly SAB and BP eligible consumers to RSB to determine their desire or need to participate in VR or Older Blind Service programs. There are also referral procedures to/from the state-funded Prevention of Blindness Program for ophthalmologic services, as well as the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) for vocational rehabilitation services and training to qualify for employment as a Randolph Sheppard vendor.

Small Business Development Centers

RSB works cooperatively with the Small Business Administration's Small Business Development Centers. Consultants with the Centers lend their expertise to RSB staff and clients in development of proposed business plans. The SBDC consultants provide additional consultation during the client's self-employment proposal meeting.

Starkloff Disability Institute

RSB is a Partner Organization with the Starkloff Disability Institute's "The Next Big Step" program. Through this program, Starkloff Disability Institute has partnered with "Role Model Companies" and "Partner Organizations" to help the Role Model Companies find disabled job candidates through Partner Organizations whom they can hire, retain, and promote.

(9) *Other private nonprofit organizations.*

Personal Vocational Adjustment Services

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) contracts with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers for the provision of comprehensive personal vocational and adjustment skills, training. This document also contains the fee for service price the provider will charge for services offered.

The center based vocational rehabilitation services are specifically designed to meet the training needs of individuals who are blind and visually impaired. Training includes instruction in the independence and daily living skills of blindness. Consumers receive instruction in braille, orientation and mobility, and the use of screen readers and magnification software.

RSB currently has contracts for center based personal and vocational adjustment training with:

Alphapointe Association for the Blind, Kansas City, Missouri

Colorado Center for the Blind, Littleton, Colorado

Louisiana Center for the Blind, Inc., Ruston, Louisiana

World Services for the Blind, Little Rock, Arkansas

Hellen Keller National Center, New York, New York

Additionally, RSB has contractual agreements with 10 individual and/or community resources. This includes centers for independent living to obtain rehabilitation engineering, braille instruction, orientation and mobility services, and transition training.

Other Services

For rarely used yet very specific client services that are required to help a client achieve their stated goals, RSB utilizes the Expenditure Registration System ERS101 “authorization for services” process. This allows RSB flexibility to provide other client specific rehabilitation services, such as vocational evaluation, employee development, vocational skill training, and job search skill training through non-profit rehabilitation service providers.

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The VR agency must select the “Edit” button to review and agree to the VR State plan Assurances.

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation

The State Plan must include
Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate,

The State Plan must include
and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The State Plan must include
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State:
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for

The State Plan must include
individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances will be met?

Yes

Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind) Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by title IV of WIOA[1], and its State Plan supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;

[1] Public Law 113-128.

Enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate

Family Support Division, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

2. In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit)[2] agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[3], the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations[4], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

Enter the name of designated State agency

Family Support Division, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency, or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan^[5], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations^[6], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

^[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

^[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

4. The designated State unit or, if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.

7. The (enter the name of authorized representative below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

Enter the name of authorized representative below

Mandi Adams, Director, Family Support Division

8. The (enter the title of authorized representative below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;

Enter the title of authorized representative below

Director, Family Support Division

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

[1] Public Law 113-128. [2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph. [3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act. [4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361. [5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act. [6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

[1] Public Law 113-128.

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

Certification Signature

To review and complete the Certification section of the VR portion of the State plan, please select the “Edit” button.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open [this link](#) to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Mandi Adams
Title of Signatory	Director Family Support Division
Date Signed	

Appendix 1: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

Include the state's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

	Title I – Adult Program			
	Program Year: PY2026		Program Year: PY2027	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	77.0%	Not available	77.0%	Not available
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	76.5%	Not available	76.5%	Not available
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$8,200	Not available	\$8,200	Not available
Credential Attainment Rate	66.5%	Not available	66.5%	Not available
Measurable Skill Gains	57.0%	Not available	57.0%	Not available

	Title I – Dislocated Worker Program			
	Program Year: PY2026		Program Year: PY2027	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	77.0%	Not available	77.0%	Not available
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	76.5%	Not available	76.5%	Not available
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$9,000	Not available	\$9,000	Not available
Credential Attainment Rate	73.0%%	Not available	73.0%	Not available
Measurable Skill Gains	65.0%	Not available	65.0%	Not available

	Title I – Youth Program			
	Program Year: PY2026		Program Year: PY2027	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ¹	80.0%	Not available	80.0%	Not available
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ²	78.0%	Not available	78.0%	Not available
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$4,300	Not available	\$4,300	Not available
Credential Attainment Rate	63.5%	Not available	63.5%	Not available
Measurable Skill Gains	53.0%	Not available	53.0%	Not available

¹ For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training.

² For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training.

	Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program			
	Program Year: 2025		Program Year: 2026	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	45.0%	45.0%	41%	45.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	44.0%	48.9%	42%	48.9%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$4,750	\$5,500	\$7,887	\$5,500
Credential Attainment Rate	47.0%	47.3%	63%	47.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	62.0%	62.5%	65%	62.5%

	Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program			
	Program Year:		Program Year:	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	71.5%	Not available	71.5%	Not available
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	69.5%	Not available	69.5%	Not available
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$7,400	Not available	\$7,400	Not available
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

	Vocational Rehabilitation Program			
	Program Year: 2026		Program Year: 2027	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ²²	63%	Not available at this time	63%	Not available at this time
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ²²	60.8%	Not available at this time	61%	Not available at this time
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) ³	\$5,732	Not available at this time	\$5,732	Not available at this time
Credential Attainment Rate	59.8%	Not available at this time	60%	Not available at this time
Measurable Skill Gains	70.5%	Not available at this time	71%	Not available at this time

	All WIOA Core Programs			
	Program Year:		Program Year:	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	67.1%	Not available	67.1%	Not available

Additional Indicators of Performance
1.
2.
3.
4.

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Wagner-Peyser Act program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it elects to include in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.²⁴ If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II-IV of this document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

(OMB Control Number: 0970-0145)

- A. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The Temporary Assistance (TA) cash program shall include requiring an applicant for or recipient of cash assistance to participate in work activities as defined in an individual employment plan.

Parents and needy caretaker relatives will not be referred as mandatory for work participation services but may be referred as a volunteer, in the following situations:

- Child only cases;
- Parents and needy caretaker relatives exempt for children under the age of twelve (12) weeks;
- Parents and needy caretaker relatives who are permanently disabled;
- Parents and needy caretaker relatives who are sixty (60) years of age or older;
- Parents and needy caretaker relatives who are needed in the home to care for a disabled individual; or
- Parents and needy caretaker relatives who received forty-five (45) months Temporary Assistance and are currently extended due to an existing hardship and not employment and training ready.

The eligibility requirements for the Temporary Assistance cash program shall include:

- Requiring an applicant or recipient of cash assistance to participate in work activities as defined in this plan with exclusions as provided;
- Requiring a recipient of assistance and each dependent child to be:
 - o A resident of the State of Missouri; and
 - o A citizen of the United States; or
 - o A qualified alien defined in 8 United States Code section 1641 residing in the United States for a period of five (5) years on or after August 22, 1996, except as provided in 8 United States Code section 1622(b).
- Public Law 111-118 enacted on December 19, 2009 provides that Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants are eligible for benefits to the same extent and for the same period as refugees pursuant to Section 207 of the Immigrations and Nationality Act. The new legislation supersedes Public Law 110-161 and Public Law 110-181, which granted certain Iraqi and Afghan immigrants special immigrant status under section 101(a)(27)

of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) effective December 26, 2007 and was time limited. Provided that other eligibility requirements are met, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants are eligible for benefits indefinitely;

- Requiring an applicant for assistance to provide all Social Security numbers for each parent, caretaker, and child and requiring the applicant for or recipient of assistance to cooperate with Family Support Division to obtain Social Security numbers;
- The assistance provided under the Temporary Assistance Program is used for the benefit of the child or children;
- Recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) shall not be eligible for Temporary Assistance. Their income, expenses, and resources are excluded when determining household eligibility. They are excluded for purposes of determining household size; and Meeting other eligibility requirements contained in this plan;
- Application for benefits and timely investigation of eligibility for benefits will be consistent with sections 208.060 and 208.070, RSMo. In Temporary Assistance cases where an eligible individual does not receive the first payment for the month in which the thirtieth day after application falls, a delayed payment will be made for that month and any later months that occur before the application was approved.
- The real and personal property considered in determining eligibility for Temporary Assistance shall be as follows:
 - Real or personal property of any kind or character that is not excluded that the recipient owns or possesses, has an interest in, of which s/he is the record or beneficial owner, less encumbrances of record.
 - An applicant may not own personal property with equity greater than one thousand dollars (\$1,000), and a recipient who signs an IEP may not own personal property with equity greater than five thousand dollars (\$5,000).
 - Any combination of more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for applicants and five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for recipients who have signed IEPs will make the family ineligible.
- In determining eligibility for Temporary Assistance benefits real property that the family is making a good faith effort to sell shall be excluded. A claimant must provide proof of good faith effort as requested by Family Support Division. Good faith effort to sell includes the following:
 - Listing the real property with a reputable real estate agent and cooperating in marketing the property. Cooperation in marketing the property includes acts such as showing the property and setting a realistic sales price;
 - Publicly advertising the property for sale on no less than a weekly basis in a general newspaper, instead of listing the property with a reputable real estate agent;
 - Accepting reasonable purchase offers, for example, reflecting a reasonable market value; and
 - Initiating any legal action necessary to force a sale when other owners outside the Temporary Assistance cash assistance group do not wish to sell.

- “Earned Income” encompasses income in cash or in kind earned by a needy individual through the receipt of wages, salary, commissions, or profit from activities in which s/he is engaged as an employee or as a self-employed individual.
- Temporary Assistance shall be granted on behalf of an eligible child or children in otherwise eligible families. Temporary Assistance may be granted to the parents or other needy relatives caring for a child or children meeting all eligibility criteria, and who are deprived of parental support or care for the following reasons:
 - Death;
 - Continued absence from or never living in the home;
 - Physical or mental incapacity of a parent;
 - Divorce/separation;
 - Desertion or abandonment;
 - Need; or
 - Confinement in a penal, medical, or custodial institution.
- The relative with whom a child may be living, in order to receive Temporary Assistance, including father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, stepfather or stepmother (but not their parents), stepbrother, stepsister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, first cousin of a parent, nephew, niece, adoptive father or adoptive mother, grandfather-in-law or grandmother-in-law (meaning the spouse of a second marriage of one of the child’s biological grandparents), great-grandfather or great-grandmother (including great-great-grandfather or great-great-grand-mother), brother or sister of half-blood, adoptive brother or adoptive sister, brother-in-law or sister-in-law, uncle or aunt of the half blood, uncle-in-law or aunt-in-law, great-uncle or great-aunt (including great-great- uncle or great-great- aunt), and other relatives by adoption, in addition to those specifically mentioned here, may be considered eligible payees within the same degree of relationship as apply to blood relatives. The biological relatives of an adopted child may also continue to be eligible payees. A legal guardian may also serve as a payee for Temporary Assistance, and if the legal guardian is otherwise eligible, may be eligible for a cash payment.
- Home is interpreted to mean a family setting maintained or in the process of being established as evidenced by the assumption or continuance of responsibility for the child. Usually the child shares the family household with the parent or relative. A home exists as long as the parent or relative takes responsibility for the care and control of the child, even though circumstances may require temporary absence of either the child or the parent or relative from the customary family setting.
- Determining the Amount of Cash Payments:
 - The following persons are considered members of the household for purposes of determining household size and Temporary Assistance grant, if eligible: eligible children under the age of eighteen (18), or age eighteen (18) and in secondary school or the equivalent vocational or technical school if expected to graduate; natural or adoptive parents of one or more of the eligible children; and any needy non-parent caretaker relative or related or unrelated guardian. The non-parent caretaker relative or the guardian, if found to be eligible for inclusion, has the option to be excluded from the assistance group.

- Consideration of Available Income
- All income of the following persons in the household shall be considered in determining whether the children (including a stepchild and adopted child) are in need and, if so, the amount of that need:
 - Eligible children;
 - Biological or adoptive parents of one or more eligible children;
 - Needy non-parent caretaker relative, or related or unrelated guardian, if s/he desires to be included in the assistance group and is eligible for inclusion;
 - Income of a stepparent living in the same home as such child which exceeds the sum of the first ninety (\$90) dollars of the stepparent's earned income, the full need standard, payments by the stepparent to individuals claimed by him/her as dependents, and payments by the stepparent of court ordered alimony or child support;
 - A biological or adoptive brother or sister of an eligible child, if the brother or sister meets certain conditions and is living in the home;
 - With respect to an eligible child who is living with a parent or legal guardian who is under age eighteen (18), the income of such minor parent's parents who are living in the home shall be included to the same extent that the income of a stepparent is included. The minor parent's parents' earned income shall be disregarded up to 100% of the federal poverty level; and
 - Income of all other persons in the household will be considered in the amount made available to the household.
- In computing the income of an applicant or program recipient or of the household of which s/he is a member only the income that is available during the period under consideration shall be taken into account.
- Earned Income Exemption and Disregards: In determining the need and amount of grant for applicants for or program recipients in the Temporary Assistance program earned income exemptions will apply. These include:
 - Standard Work Exemption – An amount for each employed person for all employment related expenses except child care. It includes employment related expenses such as taxes, transportation to and from work, work clothing, etc. The standard work exemption is ninety (\$90).
 - \$30 Plus 1/3 Disregard – An amount for each employed person that is deducted after deducting the standard work exemption from adjusted gross income. The \$30 plus 1/3 disregard is allowed for individuals that are employed when they apply for Temporary Assistance. The \$30 plus 1/3 disregard is allowed for 4 consecutive months. Once the \$30 plus 1/3 disregard is applied for 4 consecutive months, the individual is not eligible for the \$30 plus 1/3 disregard until the individual has not received Temporary Assistance benefits for 12 consecutive months. An applicant's eligibility is determined without the \$30 plus 1/3 disregard unless the applicant received a Temporary Assistance grant in at least one of the 4 months prior to the month of application, except when the applicant previously received the \$30 plus 1/3 disregard for 4 consecutive

months and has not been off Temporary Assistance for twelve (12) consecutive months.

- o \$30 Disregard – After receiving the \$30 plus 1/3 disregard for four (4) consecutive months, the recipient is eligible for a continuance of the \$30 earned income disregard for the next eight (8) months. The 8-month period begins with the month following the fourth consecutive month in which the \$30 plus 1/3 disregard is applied. It ends with the eighth consecutive month regardless of whether the \$30 disregard is actually applied to the person's earned income.
- o Two-Thirds Disregard – An amount for each employed person that is deducted from the adjusted gross income for twelve (12) consecutive months. Once the two-thirds disregard is applied for 12 consecutive months, the individual is not eligible for the two-thirds disregard until the individual has not received Temporary Assistance for twelve (12) consecutive months. The two-thirds disregard is allowed only when an active Temporary Assistance individual becomes employed. An applicant's eligibility is determined without the two-thirds disregard. If an applicant received a Temporary Assistance grant in at least one of the 4 months prior to the month of application, they can receive the two-thirds disregard for the remainder of the 12 consecutive months, except when the applicant previously received the \$30 plus 1/3 disregard for four (4) consecutive months and has not been off Temporary Assistance for twelve (12) consecutive months.
- o New Spouse Disregard – When an active Temporary Assistance recipient gets married, the new spouse's income and resources are disregarded when determining continued eligibility for six months of consecutive receipt of Temporary Assistance. This is allowed once-in-a-lifetime for the TA recipient that marries, and applied to both parents in a two parent household that marry, if both are active TA recipients on the marriage date. This disregard excludes all income of the individual who is the new spouse of the TA recipient and will be used before other earned income disregards.
- 185% Test: No family shall be eligible for Temporary Assistance benefits if for that month the total income of the family (other than Temporary Assistance benefits) without application of the earned income disregards equals or exceeds one hundred eighty five percent (185%) of the Standard of Need for a family of the same composition. There are no disregards or deductions allowed for the 185% Test other than overhead expenses for self-employment.
- Standard of Need Test: No family shall be eligible for Temporary Assistance benefits if for that month the total income of the family (other than Temporary Assistance benefits) without application of the earned income disregards equals or exceeds the Standard of Need for a family of the same composition. The ninety (\$90) standard work exemption, child care costs, and overhead expenses for self-employment are deducted from gross earnings in the Standard of Need Test.
- Percentage of Need Test: No family shall be eligible for Temporary Assistance benefits if for that month the total income of the family (other than Temporary Assistance benefits) after application of the earned income disregards equals or exceeds 34.526% of the Standard of Need. The ninety (\$90) standard work exemption, child care costs, and two-thirds disregard or \$30 plus 1/3 disregard, or \$30 disregard, and overhead

expenses for self-employment are deducted from gross earnings in the Percentage of Need Test.

- When considering an application for Temporary Assistance the income tests must indicate income below the respective standard. If determined eligible after the application of the tests in paragraphs 11, 12, and 13, the grant will be the deficit determined in the Percentage of Need Test.
- In the payment of Temporary Assistance benefits the amount shall always be lowered to the nearest dollar interval.
- In Temporary Assistance cases the initial assistance payment benefit must be prorated when the case is approved in the same month as the filing of the application.
- Restitution and recovery may be required if at any time it is determined that a program recipient has received benefits to which s/he was not entitled because of a state or federal statutory or regulatory requirement.
- Transitional Employment Benefit is a fifty (\$50) payment to families with earned income who are no longer eligible for Temporary Assistance benefits due to an increase in income, removal of an earnings disregard or an allowable expense deduction, or a household composition change which causes ineligibility due to income guidelines for Temporary Assistance provided—
 - The family received Temporary Assistance cash benefits for at least one (1) month;
 - There is a work eligible individual, as defined in 45 C.F.R.261.10, included in the family;
 - Work eligible individuals in the family continue to meet the minimum work participation hours as outlined in 42 U.S.C. 607; and
 - The family continues to meet all other eligibility requirements contained in 13 CSR 40-2.300 through 13 CSR 40-2.370 with the exception of income.
- All earned income is disregarded in determining eligibility for Transitional Employment Benefit, but the eligible family must continue to meet the regular Temporary Assistance 185% Test, Standard of Need Test, and Percentage of Need Test.
- The family is eligible to receive the fifty dollar (\$50.00) Transitional Employment Benefit payment for up to six (6) consecutive months as long as the family meets the requirements.
- There is no limit on the number of times a family may receive Transitional Employment Benefit payments as long as the family loses eligibility for Temporary Assistance as outlined above.
- The Transitional Employment Benefit is not included in the 45-month lifetime limit for Temporary Assistance as referenced in 42 U.S.C. 608.
- Families who receive Transitional Employment Benefits shall not assign to the Family Support Division in behalf of the state any rights to support from any other person on behalf of any member of the family.
- Temporary Assistance Cash Diversion Program is a single lump sum benefit an applicant may opt to receive instead of monthly Temporary Assistance benefits.

This payment is intended to resolve a one-time financial need, and to prevent the family from becoming dependent upon monthly benefits. The process for applying for the Cash Diversion program is the same as applying for the Temporary Assistance program. To be eligible for Cash Diversion a household:

- o Must be eligible for the Temporary Assistance Program; and
 - o Must meet a verified good cause reason. Acceptable reasons are: Involuntary loss of employment, catastrophic illness, domestic violence or human trafficking victim, or inability to care for the basic needs of their family due to an emergency event.
- The Cash Diversion payment's one-time lump sum amount is equal to the maximum benefit based on household size for a two (2) or three (3) month period. The head of household must state the amount of money that will satisfy their immediate need and what the money will cover.
- A family is not eligible for Cash Diversion if an adult in the household has reached his or her Temporary Assistance Cash benefit lifetime limit. Months that a family receives a payment under the Cash Diversion program do not count toward the Temporary Assistance Cash benefit lifetime limit.
- A head of household can only receive a total of five (5) Cash Diversion payments in his or her lifetime as the parent, caretaker, or guardian in the household. This counts Cash Diversion payments received in another state.
- A family can only receive one (1) Cash Diversion payment during a twelve (12)-month period. A family who has received the Cash Diversion payment cannot receive regular Temporary Assistance Cash benefits for the number of month's equivalent to the months covered by the Cash Diversion payment.
- Missouri provides emergency assistance that is authorized under prior law, including but not limited to, child care, respite care and services for children and youth placed under DSS' care.

The state must indicate how victims of sexual harassment and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking will be identified and served to be in compliance with the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022.

- Ensure all applicants and potential applicants know of assistance made available by the state to victims of sexual harassment and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
- All Family Support Division Staff responsible for administering the TANF program will be trained in:
 - o The nature and dynamics of sexual harassment and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking;
 - o State standards and procedures relating to the prevention of, and assistance for, individuals who are victims of sexual harassment of survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking;

- o Methods of ascertaining and ensuring the confidentiality of personal information and documentation related to applicants for assistance and their children who have provided notice about their experiences of sexual harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.
- Establish and enforce standards and procedures regarding the screening for and identification of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking and provide information about the options available to current and potential beneficiaries. Ensure that caseworkers and other agency personnel receive training regarding relevant state standards and procedures.

B. REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

- Based on assessment, parents and needy caretaker relatives who are not otherwise exempt or temporarily excluded from participation will, in collaboration with a case manager, develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) to assist individuals in overcoming barriers to employment by developing a job readiness plan.
- Agencies that contract or have agreements with the Department of Social Services for work and training activities are responsible for placing families referred to them by Family Support Division in a work activity as outlined below. Federal, state and agency policy related to work activities, hours of participation; exemptions, exclusions, and good cause for not participating in a work activity are followed. In Missouri, work participation services are called Missouri Work Assistance (MWA).
- The Family Support Division requires providers must make referrals to mental health providers, substance abuse service providers, domestic violence service providers, support groups, and any other entities to help recipients find appropriate resources and services to achieve the goal of employment and economic self-sufficiency. This collaboration is to be structured to include contacts and an infrastructure to facilitate access by Temporary Assistance recipients and their families.
- Missouri is using a “Best Interest of the Participant” approach when assisting participants.
- An individual in a single-parent family with a child age six or older is engaged in work if s/he participates an average of 30 hours per week.
- A single custodial parent or caretaker relative with a child under age six is engaged in core work activities if the individual participates in work activities for at least an average of 20 hours per week.
- If the individual is a single custodial parent caring for a child under age six and if the individual has demonstrated the inability to work as determined by the Family Support, the Family Support Division shall not reduce assistance because

of the individual's refusal to engage in required work because of one or more of the following reasons:

- o Unavailability of appropriate child care within reasonable distance from the individual's home or work site;
- o Unavailability or unsuitability of informal child care by a relative or under other arrangements; or
- o Unavailability of appropriate and affordable child care arrangements.
- Workforce Development Expansion Program: The workforce development program expansion projects funded through TANF will serve Food Stamp recipients with child(ren) at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. The Food Stamp recipients will be enrolled in the SkillUP program which provides a variety of employment and training services through multiple providers to reduce and end the dependency on government benefits. These funds will also allow for short-term payment of services to ensure the participant's success, such as, childcare copayments; housing assistance; and utilities. This program meets TANF purpose 2.

C. ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (A)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

- Work participation services will include, but are not limited to:
 - o Development of service/employability plan;
 - o Job readiness workshop activities;
 - o Skills training;
 - o Job Search assistance;
 - o Vocational skill assessments;
 - o Authorization of work related expenses and/or transportation expenses;
 - o Assistance with locating child care providers;
 - o Job development; and
 - o Development of work experience and transitional job opportunities.
- Unless expressly provided in the plan, a parent or caretaker receiving assistance must engage in work activities. The purpose of work participation services is to provide the necessary services and supports to assist Temporary Assistant recipients to be successful in obtaining employment that will lead to self-sufficiency.
- The following individuals, if eligible for assistance, are exempt from participating in work activities but may voluntarily participate:
 - o An individual claiming or receiving permanent and total disability and who has applied for or is receiving Old Age Survivor's and Disability Insurance (OASDI) benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, or employer-sponsored disability insurance.
 - o Caretaker-payees sixty (60) years of age or older.
 - o Individuals who are needed in the home to care for a disabled individual in their household who has a physical or mental handicap.

- A single custodial parent caring for a child who has not attained twelve (12) weeks of age. A referral is sent to the provider to contact the client to determine if they want to volunteer.

EXCLUSIONS FROM WORK ACTIVITIES

- Individuals, if eligible for assistance, may be temporarily excluded from participating in work activities if they are victims of domestic violence; temporarily disabled; lack transportation or child care; or if they actively participate with a Children's Division plan.

GOOD CAUSE FOR NOT PARTICIPATING IN A MWA WORK ACTIVITY

- If an individual in a family subject to work participation requirements fails to cooperate in developing the IEP, without good cause fails to comply with the IEP, or without good cause refuses to engage in a required work activity, the Family Support Division shall reduce the amount of assistance otherwise payable to the family by fifty (50%), if non-compliance continues a full family sanction is imposed.
- The following constitute good cause for failure to participate or accept employment:
 - The employment would result in the family of the recipient experiencing a net loss of cash income. Net loss of cash income results if the family's gross income less necessary work-related expenses is less than the cash assistance the individual was receiving when the offer of employment was made. Gross income includes, but is not limited to, earnings, unearned income, and cash assistance;
 - Court-required appearance or incarceration;
 - Emergency family crisis that renders participation unreasonable;
 - Breakdown in transportation arrangements with no readily accessible alternative means of transportation;
 - Breakdown in child care arrangements or availability of child care not suited for special needs of the child for whom it is intended; or
 - Lack of identified social services necessary for participation and set forth in the IEP.
- If the individual is a single custodial parent caring for a child under age six and if the individual has demonstrated the inability to work as determined by the Family Support, the Family Support Division shall not reduce assistance because of the individual's refusal to engage in required work because of one or more of the following reasons:
 - Unavailability of appropriate child care within reasonable distance from the individual's home or work site;
 - Unavailability or unsuitability of informal child care by a relative or under other arrangements; or
 - Unavailability of appropriate and affordable child care arrangements.
- If the Division determines after an investigation that a participant is not cooperating with a work participation activity requirement, the Division shall schedule a meeting with the participant to explain the potential sanctions and the requirements to end the sanction.
- The participant shall be given at least ten (10) business days' notice from the date of mailing of the meeting notice of the date, time and Location (including virtual) designated by Division for the participant to appear. If the participant is unable to

attend the meeting, the participant must contact the Division to reschedule the meeting prior to the scheduled meeting to request an alternative meeting date, time or place. The meeting must occur prior to or during the same calendar week as the original meeting, unless good cause exists.

- The participant shall have six (6) weeks from the first business day of the week following the meeting to comply with the work participation activity requirements as required by Division. The participant's TA benefits shall not be sanctioned during the six (6) week period.
- If the participant fails to appear for the scheduled meeting they shall have six (6) weeks from the first business day of the week following the most recent scheduled meeting with Division to comply with the work participation activity requirements. The participant's TA benefits are not sanctioned during the six (6) week period. This six (6) week period is the conciliation period.
- If the participant does not comply with the work participation activity requirements during the six (6) week period the Division shall apply a sanction terminating fifty (50) percent of the full amount of TA benefit to the participant and the participant's family for a period of no more than ten (10) weeks.
- During this ten week period the participant shall remain in sanction status. To end the sanction the participant shall perform work participation activities for a minimum average of thirty (30) hours per week for four consecutive (4) weeks.
- Failure to complete these requirements will result in the participant's TA case being closed.

D. TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

- Officers and employees of the state of Missouri are prohibited, except as described below, from disclosing any information obtained by them in the discharge of their official duties relative to the identity of applicants for or recipients of benefits or the contents of any records, files and communication except in proceedings where the eligibility for benefit level of a recipient is called into question.
- No person, association, firm, corporation, or other agency shall make use of any name or list of names of recipients of cash assistance.
- Information can be released for the administration of any Federal or federally assisted program which provides assistance in cash, in-kind, or services directly to individuals on the basis of need.

E. ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Extended Women's Health Services Program

- As a part of Missouri's Medicaid 1115 Waiver, uninsured women losing MO HealthNet for Pregnant Women (Missouri's Medicaid Program for pregnant women) eligibility 12 months after the birth of their child will remain eligible for coverage of women's health

services. The coverage continues for a maximum of one year any time Medicaid eligibility due to pregnancy expires. There is no income limit. Eligibility automatically extends following the current 12 month post -partum period. The recipient must not currently have insurance that provides coverage for physician's services and hospitalization. The requirement that health insurance not have been dropped in the last six months does not apply. This is a new state legislation from the 2023 session.

- Women in this category are eligible for a one year period for the following services only:
 - Approved methods of contraception;
 - Pap test;
 - Pelvic exams;
 - Sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment;
 - Family planning, counseling, education on various methods of birth control, and;
 - Drugs, supplies, or devices related to the women's health services described above, when they are prescribed by a physician or advanced practice nurse.

Personal Responsibility Education Program

- The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services administers the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) to support teen pregnancy prevention strategies to reduce out-of-wedlock births. PREP serves adolescents ages 12-19 in some of the highest need counties of Missouri by providing evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention education programs which also include addressing adulthood preparation topics.

Teen Outreach Program

- The Teen Outreach Program (TOP) is administrated by the Department of Health and Senior Services to replicate one of the few rigorously evaluated programs proven effective in increasing school success and protecting youth from risk factors that contribute to teen pregnancy and other negative health behaviors.

Transitional Living Placement

- The Department of Social Services (DSS) supports a Transitional Living Placement (TLP) for foster children and troubled youth. This is a two-tiered program. The first tier, Transitional Living Placement- Group Home (TLG) provides an opportunity for older youth to practice life skills in order to live successfully in the community. TLG allows the youth to apply life skills training to actual daily living in a supervised setting. Ideally, TLG offers the youth the opportunity to transition smoothly from a more restrictive environment to a less restrictive setting based on their readiness.
- The second tier, Transitional Living Placement-Scatter Sites (TLSS), is for youth who demonstrate the ability to make responsible decisions, are able to maintain employment, and are aware of the financial and emotional demands of living on their own. These youth are able to practice 'real life' skills and prepare for their future in an apartment setting. Youth who participate in this tier receive support, but have less supervision than those in the TLG.

F. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

- Law enforcement officers in the State of Missouri are mandated to receive 1,000 hours of training regarding sex crimes that includes extensive coverage of statutory rape. Because of their knowledge and training, the Department of Social Services (DSS) encourages the use of law enforcement to educate teen fathers, non-custodial fathers and young males participating in state sponsored or state supported programs. This resource is most beneficial to the programs established to address the reduction of out-of-wedlock births in Missouri that are wide spread throughout the state. This includes, but is not limited to, programs within the education system, Caring Communities, programs within DSS directed toward teens, and other DSS programs such as Child Support.

G. IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

- For the purpose of the administration of Temporary Assistance payments shall be defined as payments by electronic or other means made to the payee at regular intervals. Temporary Assistance benefits will be paid monthly.
- Temporary Assistance benefits are delivered by Electronic Benefits Transfer or are directly deposited into a bank account and are made available monthly in advance. The schedule for availability of benefits is:
 - Benefits for cases in which the payee's birth month is January through March shall be available on the first day of the month;
 - Benefits for cases in which the payee's birth month is April through June shall be available on the second day of the month;
 - Benefits for cases in which the payee's birth month is July through September shall be available on the third day of the month; and
 - Benefits for cases in which the payee's birth month is October through December shall be available on the fourth day of the month.
- Temporary Assistance benefits are to be used for the needs of the child(ren).
- Transactions using Temporary Assistance benefits issued by Electronic Benefit Transfer are prohibited in the following locations:
 - Any liquor store;
 - Casino, gambling casino, gaming establishment;
 - Retail establishment providing adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment purposes; and Any place mainly for or used by adults 18 or older and/or not in the best interest of the child or household.

- o Transactions using Temporary Assistance benefits issued by Electronic Benefit Transfer are prohibited for the following items:
 - o Alcoholic beverages;
 - o Lottery tickets, gambling, bingo;
 - o Tobacco products;
 - o Controlled drugs without a valid prescription; and
 - o Any item mainly for or used by adults 18 or older and/or not in the best interest of the child or household.
- Temporary Assistance Electronic Benefit Transfer transactions are blocked at the locations listed above based upon Merchant Category Codes (MCC) and Terminal ID. The MCC describes the type of business, and for businesses that provide multiple goods and services it reflects the greater percentage of the business. The MCC is assigned by the bank or financial institution that processed the business' application to start accepting bankcard payments. Terminal ID's have been identified to block specific ATM's that are placed in prohibited locations. Additional MCCs and Terminal ID's may be added or deleted at any time. The types of transactions blocked include:
 - o Credit or debit card service;
 - o Automated teller machine;
 - o Point-of-sale terminals; or
 - o Any online system for the withdrawal of funds or processing of payment for merchandise or a service.
- Reports and individual transactions are reviewed using Fraud Navigator, a product of the Electronic Benefit Transfer vendor that recognizes patterns for fraud detection.

H. ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

- Temporary Assistance recipients using Electronic Benefit Transfer transactions have access to use or withdraw assistance with minimal fees or charges. Access is available in any store that displays the QUEST Mark, or automated teller machine that displays the Quest Mark, Honor, or Shazam logos. Temporary Assistance Electronic Benefit Transfer transactions are not blocked at any retailer authorized as a vendor by the Food and Nutrition Service. Information regarding accessing benefits with no fees and when fees may apply are provided to each Temporary Assistance applicant and recipient, which includes the following information:
 - o No fee is charged for the first withdrawal at an automated teller machine. There is an \$.85 charge for each additional withdrawal.
 - o No fee is charged for purchases or cash withdrawal at a point-of-sale terminal.
 - o There may be additional surcharges by the retailer.
- Information regarding accessing Temporary Assistance benefits is publicly available in the form of a brochure at each agency office and on the internet at:

- o <https://mydss.mo.gov/temporary-assistance>
- o <https://dssmanuals.mo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/temporary-assistance-brochure.pdf>
- o <https://dssmanuals.mo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ebt-flyer.pdf>
- The agency will review on a case-by-case basis any recipient report of inability to access their cash assistance due to the restriction of use at these locations.

I. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

- Families moving into the State from another state will be eligible for assistance in the same manner as any other resident of the State except that the State will not grant assistance for any month for which another state pays the family assistance under its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

J. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

- Requiring an applicant or recipient of cash assistance to participate in work activities as defined in this plan with exclusions as provided;
- Requiring a recipient of assistance and each dependent child to be:
 - o A resident of the State of Missouri; and
 - o A citizen of the United States; or
 - o A qualified alien defined in 8 United States Code section 1641 residing in the United States for a period of five (5) years on or after August 22, 1996, except as provided in 8 United States Code section 1622(b).
- Public Law 111-118 enacted on December 19, 2009 provides that Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants are eligible for benefits to the same extent and for the same period as refugees pursuant to Section 207 of the Immigrations and Nationality Act. The new legislation supersedes Public Law 110-161 and Public Law 110-181, which granted certain Iraqi and Afghan immigrants special immigrant status under section 101(a)(27) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) effective December 26, 2007 and was time limited. Provided that other eligibility requirements are met, Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants are eligible for benefits indefinitely.
- Requiring an applicant for assistance to provide all Social Security numbers for each parent, caretaker, and child and requiring the applicant for or recipient of assistance to cooperate with Family Support Division to obtain Social Security numbers;
 - o The assistance provided under the Temporary Assistance Program is used for the benefit of the child or children;
 - o Recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) shall not be eligible for Temporary Assistance. Their income, expenses, and resources are excluded when determining household eligibility. They are excluded for purposes of determining household size; and
 - o Meeting other eligibility requirements contained in this plan.

K. SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

- If a Temporary Assistance application is not acted upon within a reasonable length of time after the filing of the application or is denied in whole or in part, or if any benefits are canceled or modified and concurrently with each reinvestigation, the applicant or program recipient shall be notified in writing by the Family Support Division of his/her right to appeal to the Director. However, those program recipients receiving the maximum payment allowed by law will not be notified of their right to appeal on the basis of the amount of grant following the completion of a reinvestigation of their case. Procedure for the conduct of the hearings shall be simple, informal, and summary, but the rules of evidence as applied to civil cases in Missouri shall be applied.
- Within a reasonable time after the conclusion of a hearing the Director will render a decision, which will include a statement of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law. A copy of the decision will be sent to the appellant by United States mail. A copy will also be sent to the Family Support Division and to any duly authorized representative of the appellant.
- There is established the position of state hearing officer within the Division of Legal Services in order to comply with all pertinent federal and state laws and regulations. State hearing officers shall have authority to conduct state level hearings of a pre-determination or appeal nature; they shall serve as direct representatives of the Director. All decisions issued as a result of the hearing so conducted by the hearing officers shall be in the name of the Director. Although the hearing officers may be assigned to a certain area, this authority to conduct hearings shall be statewide. The authority of the hearing officers to conduct hearings shall apply to all programs administered by the Director.

L. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

1. PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 1397J OF THIS TITLE); OR
2. IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ELDER CARE, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS, OR OCCUPATIONS EXPECTED TO EXPERIENCE LABOR SHORTAGES AS, DETERMINED APPROPRIATE BY THE STATE FOR WHICH THE STATE IDENTIFIES AN UNMET NEED FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL, AND, IF SO, SHALL INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF SUCH ASSISTANCE.
 - Missouri continues to partner with organizations that offer training in high demand fields and advertise those opportunities to Missouri families. These partnerships help fill the gap in health care fields, state workforce, CDL drivers, and other technology fields where short-term training is offered and employment opportunities exist.

M. PROVIDE FOR ALL MOE-FUNDED SERVICES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM BENEFIT OR SERVICE, AND THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT FAMILIES MUST MEET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THAT BENEFIT OR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, FOR TANF MOE-FUNDED SERVICES (CO-MINGLED OR SEGREGATED MOE) DESCRIBE THE

PROGRAM BENEFIT PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES (SSP SERVICES DO NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ENCOURAGES IT) (§263.2(B)(3) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

Missouri provides multiple programs for Missouri families that meet the four purposes of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Funding may be used for eligible low-income clients to support and encourage community development of local initiatives relating to services for families. Other program services may be provided to needy families or needy parents as defined elsewhere in the Plan.

Employment and Training Programs: Programs that assist individuals to obtain employment or enroll in a training that offers case management. These programs support individuals through the process to obtain skills to be competitive in the job market to obtain employment to assist with limiting government benefits. Examples of the programs may be, but are not limited to:

- Missouri Work Assistance (MWA): Missouri Work Assistance (MWA): The portion of funding claimed for purposes of TANF MOE provides services to families receiving Temporary Assistance (TA), whose income must not exceed 185% of the federal poverty level. MWA assists individuals engaging in job preparation and work activities. The goal is for families to become independent of the need for cash assistance. The MWA program provides services which include the provision of training, education, and employment preparation that will lead to employment within the shortest time possible. An assessment is completed to identify strengths and resources, identify and remove barriers, and prepare and assist them in securing and maintaining employment and self-sufficiency. This program meets TANF purpose 2.
- Jobs and Career Preparation for Youth: The portion of funding serving youth claimed for purposes of TANF MOE are those with family income not above 185% of the federal poverty level. The youth participating are between the ages of 16 – 24, or are parents of young children themselves. Contracted agencies in partnership with local businesses and community groups provide jobs or career preparation for low-income youth. Participation in the program provides work experience, skills assessments, and supportive services so that children can be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives. Participation in the program also decreases the likelihood of dependence on public assistance while preventing and reducing the number of non-marital births for these young adults. This program meets TANF purpose 1 and 3.

Meeting Basic Needs: Programs that assist individuals to obtain resources to meet basic needs. Some of these services could be non-recurring short-term benefits to address a specific crisis. Examples of the programs may be, but are not limited to:

- Domestic Violence Crisis Services: Services include both shelter and non-residential domestic violence services: meeting the needs of families in a crisis by providing housing, counseling, health supplies, clothing, and related crisis services. All services are less than 120 days in duration. In accordance with 45 CFR 260, the Family Support Division (FSD) has chosen to adopt the Family Violence Option to develop policies and procedures that will enable staff to direct and assist victims of domestic violence in obtaining financial stability. Identified victims will be allowed good cause waiver from immediate work participation. This program meets TANF purpose 1.

- Food Bank(s): The portion of funding claimed for purposes of TANF MOE are participants that include families with children 0 through 18 years of age whose family incomes are less than or equal to 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The Food Banks provide food to emergency food programs, which include local food pantries, food pantry markets, soup kitchens, and short-term emergency shelters. This program meets TANF purpose 1.
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP): SFSP funding claimed for TANF MOE helps assure that eligible families with income not above 185% of the federal poverty level have access to nutritious meals during the summer months. By providing meals with an increased nutrient value SFSP helps reduce the families risk for health problems which enhances the learning capacities of children and their parent(s). The program also improves the quality of the summer programs offered in areas of economic need. This program meets TANF purpose 1.
- Utilicare Program: When funded, the portion of funding serving families with children under 18 years of age are claimed for purposes of TANF MOE. The Utilicare program helps families with income below 135% of the federal poverty level meet their immediate energy needs. Priority is given to families with disabled household members and children under 5 years of age. The program provides utility assistance to needy families. These families have limited resources for living expenses and may be at risk of termination of utility service and/or eviction. Utilicare helps ensure these children may be cared for in their own homes, providing parents with assistance that will help them to become self-sufficient. This program meets TANF purpose 1.

Supporting Families: Programs that assist individuals or families to obtain the necessary skills to care for their family to prevent government intervention. Examples of the programs may be, but are not limited to:

- Activities Promoting Healthy Marriage: The portion of funding claimed for purposes of TANF MOE are those families served with income not above 185% of the federal poverty level. The activities funded may include: public awareness campaigns on the value of healthy marriages; programs that enhance relationship and parenting skills; marriage preparation programs and counseling; financial planning classes; divorce reduction and conflict resolution programs; providing job training to improve economic stability. Participation in these programs reduces dependence on government assistance by promoting job preparation and work, and encourages the formation and maintenance of two parent families. This program meets TANF purpose 2 and 4.
- Activities Promoting Responsible Fatherhood: The portion of funding claimed for purposes of TANF MOE are those families with income not above 185% of the federal poverty level. The activities funded may include: involving fathers in the lives of their children; improving father's economic stability through subsidized employment; financial counseling and planning; reconnecting with their children when returning home from incarceration; and skill-based parenting education. Participation in these programs reduces dependence on government assistance by promoting job preparation and work, and encourages the formation and maintenance of two parent families. This program meets TANF purpose 2 and 4.
- Alternatives to Abortion: The portion of funding serving families claimed for purposes of TANF MOE are those with family income not above 185% of the federal poverty level, and only allowable services for TANF funding. The goals of the Alternative to Abortion

(A2A) program include: improving pregnancy outcomes by helping women practice sound health-related behaviors; improving child health and development by helping parents provide more responsible and competent care for their children so that children may be cared for in their own homes; and improving families' economic self-sufficiency by helping parents continue their education and find employment which will end their dependence on government benefits. Services are provided to pregnant women and families for up to one year following childbirth. This program meets TANF purpose 1 and 2.

- Child Care Services: The portion of funding claimed for purposes of TANF MOE are for families that need child care to work, participate in work activities, or respite purposes. This includes families who receive child care during temporary periods of unemployment. This program meets TANF purpose 1.
- Community Partnerships – Community Initiatives: The portion of funding serving families claimed for purposes of TANF MOE are those with family income not above 185% of the federal poverty level with children less than 18 years of age. Capable Kids and Families (CKF) programs promote early intervention for families who have a child with a developmental delay or disability. Services provided connect families to community resources and focus on children's potential for development. Families feel less isolated, build coping skills, and are able to help their child learn and develop. By participating in this program, parents are able to provide a safe, secure, structured home environment that promotes the family and responsible parenting so that children may be cared for in their own homes. This program meets TANF purpose 1.
- Parents as Teachers: The portion of funding claimed for purposes of TANF MOE provides services of the program to all parents, regardless of income and/or resources, whose income must not exceed 185% of the federal poverty level. This program focuses on teaching parents about child development and how to promote learning by their children. It provides activities they can do with their child, and provides resources to the parent not otherwise available. By participating in this program, parents are able to provide a safe, secure, structured home environment that promotes the family and responsible parenting. This program meets TANF purpose 1.
- Services for Children and Youth: The portion of funding claimed for purposes of TANF MOE support children and youth in programs such as after-school, mentoring, and/or tutoring that offer development and improvement for life-skills and educational attainment. This program meets TANF purpose 2 and 3.

Program Management: of the Temporary Assistance program that includes:

- Data Processing: Data processing costs to support the Temporary Assistance program.
- Program Administration: Program administration costs are used to support basic assistance program, which is the same as Temporary Assistance.

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:

The State Plan must include	Include
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1. Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
2. Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
3. Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and privatesector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social SecurityAct)—	
3. (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
3. (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;	Yes
4. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);	Yes

5. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
6. (optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—	Yes
6.i. screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;	Yes
6.ii. refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and	Yes
6.iii. waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.	Yes

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (SNAP E &T) and WORK PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTIONS 6(d)(4) and 6 6(o) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008 (OMB Control Number: 0584-0083)

- (a) General Requirements²⁷: The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:

- (1) The nature of the E&T components the State agency plans to offer and the reasons for such components, including cost information. The methodology for State agency reimbursement for education components must be specifically addressed;

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formally referred to as Food Stamps in Missouri, will keep the combined state plan at the Missouri Department of Social Service Family Support Division's main office: 615 Howerton Court; Jefferson City, Missouri 65109. This plan is and will continue to be available for review upon request.

The Department of Social Services (DSS), Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives (OWCI) administers SkillUP. The mission of DSS is to empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives. The mission of OWCI is to maintain and strengthen Missouri families.

SkillUP is Missouri's Employment and Training (E&T) program for SNAP recipients. SkillUP provides job search, job search training, education, occupational skills training, intensive case management, and supportive services to SNAP recipients not participating in the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

The OWCI has contracts or agreements with Missouri's Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA), Area Resources for Community and Human Services (ARCHS), Missouri Community Action Network (MCAN), Mississippi Caring Communities (MCC), Community Partnership of Southeast Missouri (CPSEMO), and MERS Goodwill Excel Centers (Adult High Schools), MOKAN Goodwill (Adult High Schools), Great Jobs KC, Pawsperity, Per Scholas, Inc., and Worknet, Inc. to operate SkillUP. In addition, services are provided through Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) providers including Equus, MERS Goodwill, LINC, and Better Family Life (BFL).

All of the partners utilize the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development's (DHEWD) case management system, called MoJobs, to serve SkillUP participants. Providers identify potential SkillUP participants in MoJobs as the DSS Family Support Division (FSD) eligibility system interfaces with MoJobs to provide all Volunteers/ABAWDs and case closures. All providers verify the client is eligible through the MoJobs system. If there are any questions regarding potential eligibility,

providers contact FSD or OWCI for eligibility verification. If the person is not eligible, providers will refer clients to the Job Center of the client's choice as well as other community resources.

The DSS OWCI's model for FY2024 continues to focus on providing services to the unemployed and under-employed which results in rapid attachment to work and reduces or effectively eliminates the need for public assistance. In instances where a participant requires training or a certificate for a specific skillset, providers continue to utilize short term classes.

All SkillUP participants must complete an intake process that is documented in MoJobs including: orientation, completing an employability assessment, receiving Labor Market Information (LMI), and beginning an Employment Plan.

Components offered are:

Non-Education, Non-Work Components

Job Retention Services

Description of Component: SkillUP providers make a good faith effort to contact participants who obtain employment within the first 30 days after employment. Providers enroll eligible SkillUP participants in the Job Retention component, including providing information on what services can be provided once a job is obtained, but no longer than 90 days. In addition, MoJobs tracks the participant for 90 days post-exit. OWCI has access to reports in MoJobs and periodically does desk monitoring on different areas. Job retention services may include follow-up, case management, transportation related expenses and work-related expenses.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target Population: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.
- Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 90
- Estimated annual cost: \$8,700

Job Search Training

Description of Component: This component is designed to help SkillUP participants improve their job search skills and improves their chances of finding employment. This component focuses on enhancing job readiness by teaching job seeking techniques, boosting motivation, and building self-confidence. This component may include resume and cover letter assistance, interview skills training, and employability assessments. JST must be included with other SkillUP components and compromise of less than half the total required time spent on those activities.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.
- Projected annual participants (unduplicated count): 1,163
- Estimated annual cost: \$91,877

- Outcome Reporting Measure(s): percentage of participants that obtained employment within a year after component participation.

Self-Employment Training

Description of Component: This component improves the employability of participants by providing training in setting up and operating a small business or other self-employment venture. Participants in this component must be assessed thoroughly to determine they have the ability to build, maintain and grow a small business while gaining financial independence. A detailed business plan including costs associated with starting a new business must be contained in the Employment Plan.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.
- Projected annual participants (unduplicated count): 2
- Estimated annual cost: \$58

Supervised Job Search

Description of Component: Supervised Job Search – (SJS) activities are directly supervised by the provider staff and can consist of but is not limited to:

1. Reviewing a participant's resume or assist in development of a resume
2. Providing an overview of best practices in conducting a successful job search
3. Identifying and resolving any barriers to employment
4. Discussing a job search plan, responsibilities, and expectations during job search activity
5. Sitting with and providing oversight while the participant is searching for jobs

All Supervised Job Search is done in the physical presence of a SkillUP case manager who can oversee the participant and assist at any time, providing the participant with one-on-one in-person support during this component. Supervised job search must occur monthly and should be appropriately paired with other components based on the participant's need.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.
- Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 388
- Estimated annual cost: \$45,008
- Outcome Reporting Measure(s): percentage of participants that have obtained employment after component participation.

Education Components

Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction

Description of Component: This component includes educational programs or activities to:

1. Improve basic skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, digital literacy, and use of mathematical ideas, and
2. Increase employability skills such as collaboration, problem solving, self-management, learning, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills required for participation in modern workplaces

Such programs include Adult Basic Education (ABE), basic literacy, and HiSET.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.
- Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 801
- Estimated annual cost: \$168,210
- Outcome Reporting Measure(s): Percentage of participants that obtained employment after component participation.

Career/Technical Education Programs or other Vocational Training

Description of Component: The Vocational Training component improves employability of participants by providing training in a specific skill or trade that allows the participant to move directly into employment. Participants who enroll in this training can receive a credential, certificate, or may have to complete additional trainings before certification.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.
- Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 1,163
- Estimated annual cost: \$67,454
- Outcome Reporting Measure(s): percentage of participants that obtain employment after component participation.

English Language Acquisition

Description of Component: English Language Acquisition assists participants in their efforts to be more proficient in the English language. Services/training may be in a classroom or through individual tutoring. English Language Acquisition may be combined with job search, job readiness, or other qualifying components as appropriate. The level of participation depends on the participant's abilities and need.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.
- Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 2
- Estimated annual cost: \$420

Integrated Education and Training/Bridge Programs

Description of Component: Integrated Education and Training is an approach that can enable adults to acquire key basic skills while simultaneously pursuing occupational or industry-specific training, helping them to advance in employment and fill employer skill needs.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.
- Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 2
- Estimated annual cost: \$420

Work Readiness Training

Description of Component: Work Readiness Training provides a number of commonly expected skills and behaviors that are necessary for any job. Work readiness skills are sometimes called soft skills, employability skills, or job readiness skills. This training will increase participant's abilities to learn how to interact with supervisors and co-workers.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.
- Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 233
- Estimated monthly cost: \$70,599
- Outcome Reporting Measure(s): percentage of participants that obtained employment after component participation.

Work Experience

Internship

Description of Component: An Internship is a professional learning experience that offers meaningful, practical work related to a participant's field of study or career interest. An internship gives a participant the opportunity for career exploration and development, and to learn new skills. All Internships must:

1. Improve the employability of someone
2. Makes this improvement through actual work experience, or training, or both
3. Enables people to move promptly into regular or private employment
4. Contains a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace
5. Operates for a limited time
6. Is performed in private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector, and
7. Follows the Fair Labor Standards
 - Geographic area: Statewide
 - Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans
 - Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 6
 - Estimated annual cost: \$1,212

Pre-Apprenticeship

Description of Component: Pre-apprenticeship is a program or set of services designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program. A

pre-apprenticeship program, by definition, has a documented partnership with at least one Registered Apprenticeship program. Pre- Apprenticeships include:

1. Improve the employability of someone
2. Makes this improvement through actual work experience, or training, or both
3. Enables people to move promptly into regular or private employment
4. Contains a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace
5. Operates for a limited time
6. Is performed in private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector, and
7. Follows the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) if there is an employee/employer relationship
 - Geographic area: Statewide
 - Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans
 - Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 1
 - Estimated annual cost: \$202

Apprenticeship

Description of Component: An apprenticeship is an arrangement in which someone learns an art, trade, or job under another.

- Geographic area: Statewide
- Target audience: ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans
- Projected annual participation (unduplicated count): 21
- Estimated annual cost: \$4,242

(2) An operating budget for the Federal fiscal year with an estimate of the cost of operation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan. Any State agency that requests 50 percent Federal reimbursement for State agency E&T administrative costs, other than for participant reimbursements, must include in its plan, or amendments to its plan, an itemized list of all activities and costs for which those Federal funds will be claimed, including the costs for case management and casework to facilitate the transition from economic dependency to self-sufficiency through work. Costs in excess of the Federal grant will be allowed only with the prior approval of FNS and must be adequately documented to assure that they are necessary, reasonable and properly allocated. A State must submit a plan amendment to request budget adjustments at least 30 days prior to planned implementation;

Direct Program and Admin Costs

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
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Salary/Wages (State agency only)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fringe Benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Non-Capital Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Materials	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Travel	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Building Space	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equipment and other capital expenditures	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Subtotal/ State Agency Costs Only	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contractual Costs	\$9,482,369	\$10,753,261.00	\$20,235,630
County Administered Direct Program Admin Cost	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Direct Program and Admin Costs	\$9,482,369	\$10,753,261.00	\$20,235,630

Indirect Costs - Using Indirect Cost Rate

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Indirect Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Indirect Costs - Using Federally Approved Cost Allocation Plan

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Federally Approved Cost Allocated Costs - State agency only	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

County Administered Allocated Costs (only applicable to County Administered Programs)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Allocated Costs based on Cost Allocation Plan	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

In-kind Contribution

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
State In-kind Contribution	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Administrative Costs	\$9,482,369.00	\$10,753,261.00	\$20,235,630.00

Participant Reimbursements

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Dependent Care	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Transportation & Other Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
State Agency Cost for Dependent Care	\$0.00		\$0.00
Total Participant Reimbursements	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Total Costs

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Total Cost	\$9,482,369.00	\$10,753,261.00	\$20,235,630.00

(3)The categories and types of individuals the State agency intends to exempt from E&T participation, the estimated percentage of work registrants the State agency plans to exempt, and the frequency with which the State agency plans to reevaluate the validity of its exemptions;

State Exemptions

EXEMPTION	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS
Excessive Child Care cost	101
Family problems, required in the home	131
Full-Time Vista Volunteer	9
Good Cause for not participating in Job training for less than 60 days	56
Inadequate Child Care	125
Lacking Transportation	2,571
Lives in a remote area	357
Mandatory Work Registrant excluded from E&T participation as Missouri is a Voluntary E&T program	42,875
Migrant of seasonal farmworker	5
Multiple Impediments-has minimum of two marginal impediments to employment and training and are not qualified for an employment and training exemption/exclusion under any single criteria	1,418
Pregnant	1,971
Temporary Disability	7,012
Total estimated number of work registrants exempt from mandatory E&T	56,631
Percent of all work registrants exempt from E&T	100.00%

ABAWDs

Anticipated number of ABAWDs in the State	14,373
Anticipated number of ABAWDs in waived areas of the State	0
Anticipated number of ABAWDs to be exempted under the State's ABAWD discretionary exemption allowance	0
Anticipated number of at-risk ABAWDs in the State	14,373
Anticipated number of mandatory E&T participants	0

Anticipated number of voluntary E&T participants	3,600
Total anticipated number of E&T participants	3,600
Anticipated number of ABAWDs to be served in E&T	360

How frequently will the State plan to re-evaluate these exemptions from mandatory E&T?

Bi-Annually at mid-certification review and annual reapplication

(4) The characteristics of the population the State agency intends to place in E&T;

ABAWDS, homeless individuals, Ex-offenders, single parents, students, those residing in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans

(5) The estimated number of volunteers the State agency expects to place in E&T;

3,600 or 100% - SkillUP is a voluntary program so all participants are volunteers.

(6) The geographic areas covered and not covered by the E&T Plan and why, and the type and location of services to be offered;

SkillUP serves all 114 counties and 1 city in Missouri.

(7) The method the State agency uses to count all work registrants as of the first day of the new fiscal year;

FSD eligibility staff assign the appropriate work registration code to each participant within the FAMIS eligibility system. There is a monthly generated report which indicates the number of “new for the month” assigned to each work registration code and the “total for the month” assigned to each work registration code. This gives DSS OWCI a total count of work registrants.

(8) The method the State agency uses to report work registrant information on the quarterly Form FNS-583;

FSD eligibility staff assign the appropriate work registration code to each participant within the FAMIS eligibility system. There is a monthly generated report which indicates the number of “new for the month” assigned to each work registration code and the “total for the month” assigned to each work registration code. This gives DSS OWCI a total count of work registrants.

(9) The method the State agency uses to prevent work registrants from being counted twice within a Federal fiscal year. If the State agency universally work registers all SNAP applicants, this method must specify how the State agency excludes those exempt from work registration under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(b)(1). If the State agency work registers nonexempt participants whenever a new application is submitted, this method must also specify how the State agency excludes those participants who may have already been registered within the past 12 months as specified under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(a)(1)(i)

The unduplicated count of individual work registrants directly impacts the estimated number of work registrants. FSD’s Eligibility system, Family Assistance Management Information System (FAMIS), tracks individual work registrants who register more than once during the federal fiscal year. Individual work registrants are counted only one time during the year as opposed to each time they are registered.

(10) The organizational relationship between the units responsible for certification and the units operating the E&T components, including units of the Statewide workforce development system, if available. FNS is specifically concerned that the lines of communication be efficient and that noncompliance by the participant be reported to the certification unit within 10 working days after the noncompliance occurs;

DSS OWCI administers the SkillUP program, which is a separate team from the SNAP certification unit which is housed in the Family Support Division (FSD). OWCI staff work closely with the FSD SNAP Program and Policy unit and are part of creating policy updates and manual changes. OWCI staff work closely with the FSD SNAP Program and Policy unit and are part of creating policy updates and manual changes. FSD Call Center and Resource Centers send referrals to OWCI. OWCI determines the appropriate provider based on the information received. FSD staff receive client specific change forms from the contracted providers. OWCI also has an email address, and each contracted provider has a single point of contact in the OWCI unit to address SNAP related inquiries

Office of Workforce Development (OWD)

For FY26, DSS OWCI is contracting directly with the Workforce Development Boards (WDB) which allows for streamlined training, increased partner collaboration, and continuous improvement. The OWD Job Center staff create referrals for clients who need services beyond Wagner- Peyser to the WDB staff. The WDB staff have access to

reports on SNAP clients being served by OWD so referrals can be made to SkillUP. DSS OWCI continues to utilize the MoJobs system, and this allows for co-enrollment and blended services. In addition, DSS OWCI staff are appointed to boards, attend board meetings, and speak at functions hosted by the boards.

Missouri Community College Association (MCCA)

MCCA continues to provide non-credit short-term training for SkillUP clients. MCCA contracts with East Central College, Jefferson College, Metropolitan Community College, Moberly Area Community College, and Ozarks Technical Community College, to implement SkillUP on their campuses. Each college provides enhanced student support services through their career counselors, which includes intensive advising, case management, and coordination of supportive services with other SkillUP providers. The colleges will either provide work or travel related supportive services or will coordinate with other providers who have these resources available. These supportive services will be available for participants who lack personal funds and who have exhausted all other means of obtaining funding to meet these needs. These funds will be used to pay for books, uniforms, testing for job requirements, certifications not included in tuition, cab fare to and from school, bus passes to and from school, and gas cards. These funds are available through TA allowable expenses for students with child(ren). For students without child(ren), MCCA will partner with the local Job Centers to provide these services.

- Career advisors and intrusive navigators will interview participants, and test via WorkKeys assessments when appropriate, to prepare for and guide participants toward an accelerated training program that will provide skills to secure a high demand job.
- There are various ways colleges may engage participants in the SkillUP program. Colleges may develop their own marketing campaigns to reach potential participants. They may also develop reverse referral processes to build relationships with local program providers which are referring back to the colleges. Colleges may approach local businesses about cohort training for which participants may be eligible. SkillUP program providers will be provided with a complete listing of program components being offered by the colleges.
- Colleges provide educational training through various short terms-a year or less- programs. An addendum at the end of the plan includes short term, credit and noncredit programs available at each of the participating schools. This list changes based on employer's needs.
- All efforts are made to guide participants to these programs; however, some may present who have unique circumstances or needs that require prerequisites before entering a program. Those courses will be offered for participants who require them.
- Post training supervised job search assistance will be made available to participants through college career centers where available and referring back to local job centers, with the ultimate goal of supporting participants in securing gainful employment.

Area Resources for Community and Human Services (ARCHS)

The DSS contracted with ARCHS to provide SkillUP services. The SkillUP project is funded with TANF funds, and the timeframe is July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026. Continued implementation of this project is dependent on TANF allocation through the State budget. ARCHS allocated TANF funding is only to serve SNAP recipients, ages 16-24 or 25 and older with a minor child.

ARCHS/Better Family Life (BFL)

ARCHS is contracted with Better Family Life in the St. Louis Promise Zone to provide SkillUP services. ARCHS provides SkillUP services through TA allowable expenses which includes, but is not limited to: rental assistance, transportation related expenses, work related expenses, payment of insurance and other expenses that cause barriers to employment.

This was a successful pilot project for state FY2019 in St. Louis City and St. Louis County to address intergenerational poverty for a target population of SNAP recipients with child(ren) under one hundred eighty-five percent (185%) of the Federal Poverty Level. This project continues to provide support and resources to reduce and end the dependency on government benefits with an integrated service model that:

1. Implements strengths-based, holistic approaches toward cognitive behavioral changes through encouragement, empowerment and motivational tools that promote economic support.
2. Intervenes and provides the support or the referrals necessary to support education, employment and career development, child care, child support, housing, legal services, and other needs of the participant to be successful in obtaining and retaining family supporting employment.

The target area is the communities within the St. Louis Promise Zone where the majority of households live at forty percent (40%) of the national poverty level. The following cities and zip codes are included within the Promise Zone:

- North St. Louis City - 63105
- Bel-Ridge – 63114, 63121 and 63134
- Dellwood – 63135 and 63136
- Ferguson - 63135
- Pagedale - 63133
- Pine Lawn – 63120 and 63121
- Northwoods - 63121
- Wellston - 63133
- St. Louis City – 63112 and 63118

Missouri Community Action Network (MCAN)

Missouri Community Action Network (MCAN) was established to unify and represent all 19 Community Action agencies, allies, and supporters statewide in Missouri committed to ending poverty. Missouri CAN is an active nonprofit association and widely respected as a strong advocate for services that help communities reduce poverty and serve as a voice for low-income families. Community Action Agencies

provide a variety of programs for low-income clients such as life-skill classes, financial management training, family support services, food and nutrition services, sponsored health programs and in-home services, and housing and energy cost assistance. Adding SkillUP to the services allows them to offer an opportunity for family supporting employment with the already provided wrap-around services. From school readiness programs like Head Start, to employment training and workforce development, the agencies offer opportunities that teach children beginning academics and provide adults with labor skills needed to land a stable job and secure family sustaining employment.

MCAN Contractor Name	Counties Served
Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA)	Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Cole, Cooper, Howard, Moniteau, Osage
Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAASTLC)	St. Louis County
Community Action Partnership of Northeast Missouri (CAPNEMO)	Adair, Clark, Knox, Scotland, and Schuyler

Community Action Partnership of St. Joseph (CAPSTJOE)	Andrew, Buchanan, Clinton, DeKalb
Delta Area Economic Opportunity Corporation (DAEOC)	Dunklin, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Scott, Stoddard
East Missouri Action Agency (EMAA)	Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Iron, Madison, Perry, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve, Washington
Jefferson Franklin Community Action Corporation (JFCAC)	Franklin, Jefferson
Missouri Valley Community Action Agency (MVCAA)	Carroll, Chariton, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, Ray, Saline
North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC)	Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Randolph, Shelby, St. Charles, Warren
Ozark Action, INC (OAI)	Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Texas, Wright
South Central Missouri Community Action Agency (SCMCAA)	Butler, Carter, Dent, Reynolds, Ripley, Shannon, Wayne

West Central Missouri Community Action Agency (WCMCAA)	Bates, Benton, Cass, Cedar, Henry, Hickory, Morgan, St. Clair, Vernon
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Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA)

Starting as a single county Community Action Agency in 1965 and growing to an 8-agency serving eight counties, CMCA's desire and ability to adapt to the needs of those in poverty and develop innovative approaches, have been paramount in allowing them to remain in the forefront in the war on poverty. Being proactive in the community has also helped prepare CMCA for the many changes it has undergone. However, one constant goal in a sea of change has been CMCA's mission: to help income eligible individuals and families achieve self-reliance through partnerships with the community. CMCA is dedicated to many projects within the eight counties they serve, they are listed below:

- The Head Start program
- The Foster Grandparents Program
- The Weatherization Assistance Program
- Community Service Block Grants (CSBG)
- Employment
- Education
- Better use of available income
- Housing
- Nutrition
- Emergency services and health

Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAASTLC)

CAASTLC is part of a national network of federally funded Community Action Agencies (CAAs), created by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. CAASTLC has provided services in St. Louis County for 50 years. Originally incorporated as Metroplex, Inc. in 1968, CAASTLC was founded as a satellite agency of and administered by the Human Development Corporation of Metropolitan St. Louis. In 1978, Metroplex, Inc. became a separate designated entity to provide anti-poverty programs for St. Louis County, excluding Wellston. In 1996, the agency's name was changed to STEP, Inc. and, in 2003, STEP, Inc. became CAASTLC. Their focus remains: to end poverty and help families who are caught in poverty.

Services are provided to 44,000 low-income people in St. Louis County annually including:

- Energy Services
- Weatherization
- Housing Assistance
- Reentry, Employment, and Entrepreneurship programs
- Crisis Intervention and Mental Health Programs
- Immigrant Inclusion Program
- Food Pantry Programs

Community Action Partnership of Northeast Missouri (CAPNEMO)

CAPNEMO has been committed to serving the local community needs of individuals and families in Adair, Clark, Knox, Schuyler, and Scotland counties since 1965.

CAPNEMO offers a variety of programs, including:

- Low Income Rental Housing,
- Head Start and Early Head Start,
- CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program),
- FDCH (Family Day Care Homes), the Weatherization Program,
- LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program),
- ECIP (Energy Crisis Intervention Program), and
- Other services supported through the CSBG (Community Services Block Grant)

The goal of CAPNEMO is to improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the services we provide to individuals and families. CAPNEMO's strategic plan focuses on strengthening agency capacity and enhancing service strategies to better meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph (CAPSTJOE)

CAPSTJOE continues to be an organization that relies on the generosity of others to make a difference in the lives of those in need and encourage a hand up towards self-sufficiency.

Programs include:

- Housing Development
- Energy Assistance
- Head Start
- Family Services
- Community Engagement
- Assessment and Referral

Delta Area Economic Opportunity Corporation (DAEOC)

DAEOC empowers people to make positive change. Some programs were created to address specific needs in only one or more counties while our Child Care Food Programs reaches outside of our service area to cover 15 counties. Programs include:

- Family Assistance
- Energy Assistance
- Home Repair
- Weatherization
- Homelessness
- Domestic Violence
- Child Care Food Program

East Missouri Action Agency (EMAA)

EMAA cultivates communities of opportunity and supports people in reaching their highest potential. Programs include:

- Community Services
- Head Start
- Women's Wellness
- Weatherization
- Housing

Jefferson Franklin Community Action Corporation (JFCAC)

The JFCAC is to serve individuals and families through partnerships, empowerment and education in order to strengthen and improve the entire community. JFCAC envisions communities with increased opportunities and an improved quality of life for families living in the crisis of poverty. Programs include:

- Housing
- Weatherization
- Women's Infant and Children
- Energy Assistance
- Head Start

Missouri Valley Community Action Agency (MVCAA)

MVCAA is a nonprofit organization that works to meet the ever changing needs in the communities by creating strategies to help children, families, senior citizens and other vulnerable populations overcome adversity. Programs include:

- Head Start
- Rental Assistance
- Early Head Start
- Energy Assistance
- Weatherization
- Workshops
- Volunteer
- Information and Assistance
- Community Development
- Crisis Intervention
- Back to School Events
- Family Resource Center
- Poverty Education

North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC)

NECAC strives to make a difference by empowering people, improving lives and building communities. Their mission is to assist the disadvantaged within the service area in their efforts to rise above poverty by providing needed services to enable each

individual to function at his or her own improved financial, physical, mental and social level. Programs include:

- Community Services
- Housing Development
- Community Health
- Employment

Ozark Action, Inc. (OAI)

OAI's mission is to coordinate and provide services for people with needs so that they can improve their quality of life. Programs include:

- C.L.A.I.M.
- Family Support Program
- Head Start
- Homeless Connect
- Housing
- Low Income Tax Assistance
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Assistance
- Utility Assistance
- Vehicle Repair Program
- Medicaid Expansion
- Volunteer Program
- Weatherization
- Workforce Development

South Central Missouri Community Action Agency (SCMCAA)

SCMCAA assists low-income residents in their efforts to become self-sufficient. This is accomplished by providing a comprehensive range of services and activities designed to improve the quality of life for individuals and families who suffer due to the causes and conditions of poverty. Programs include:

- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- Weatherization
- Energy Assistance
- Youth Employment
- Housing
- Community Services

West Central Missouri Community Action Agency (WCMCAA)

WCMCAA is dedicated to empowering people to make positive change by coordinating and administering resources. WCMCAA strives to be the voice in our communities and in our governments for those most in need. Programs include:

- Head Start
- Early Head Start

- Energy Conservation
- Employment and Training
- Family & Reproductive Health
- Housing

Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) Providers

MWA providers are based on 10 Workforce Development regions in Missouri and the City of St. Louis. As these providers were already serving Temporary Assistance (TA) recipients, it was a natural fit that they serve SNAP clients. In addition, when the MWA providers bid on the MWA contract, the TA recipient caseload was higher, but has subsequently dropped due to legislation requiring full family sanctions and lowering the lifetime limit, as well as improved economic conditions.

DSS has multiple lines of communicating with E&T providers to ensure efficiency and teamwork. To report TA non-compliance the notification to DSS is sent electronically. In addition, case reviews are conducted to ensure E&T providers are adhering to noncompliance policies.

Regions	MWA Provider Name	Counties Served
Region 1/ Northwest	Equus	Andrew, Atchison, Buchanan, Caldwell, Clinton, Davies, DeKalb, Gentry, Grundy, Harrison, Holt, Linn, Livingston, Nodaway, Mercer, Putnam, Sullivan, Worth
Region 2/ Northeast	MERS Goodwill Industries	Adair, Clark, Knox, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Randolph, Scotland, Schuyler, Shelby, Warren
Region 3/ Kansas City & Vicinity	Local Investment Commission (LINC)	Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte, Ray
Region 4/ West Central	Equus	Bates, Benton, Carroll, Cedar, Chariton, Henry, Hickory, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, Saline, St. Clair, Vernon

Region 5/ Central	MERS Goodwill Industries	Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Camden, Cole, Cooper, Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Howard, Laclede, Maries, Miller, Moniteau, Morgan, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski, Washington
Region 6/ St. Louis County & Vicinity	Better Family Life (BFL)	Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles, St. Louis County
Region 6A/ St. Louis City	Better Family Life (BFL)	St. Louis City
Region 7/ Southwest	Equus	Barton, Barry, Dade, Jasper, Lawrence, McDonald, Newton
Regions	MWA Provider Name	Counties Served
Region 8/ Ozark	Equus	Christian, Dallas, Greene, Polk, Stone, Taney, Webster
Region 9/ South Central	MERS Goodwill Industries	Butler, Carter, Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Reynolds, Ripley, Shannon, Texas, Wayne, Wright
Region 10/ Southeast	MERS Goodwill Industries	Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Dunklin, Iron, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Scott, St. Francois, St. Genevieve, Stoddard

Better Family Life (BFL)

BFL programs are centered on uniting families and empowering communities. They offer programs in community outreach, gun violence de-escalation, youth, family and clinical services, cultural arts and housing. They offer classes and workshops such as job readiness classes, financial literacy, asset development, buyer and home ownership education, and home repair and maintenance services.

Local Investment Commission (LINC)

LINC works with state and local governments, businesses, communities and civic leaders to improve the lives of children and families. LINC embraces the community school model, calling its efforts Caring Communities. These schools focus on academics,

family support, health and social services and community development. LINC provides job training and education to those on TA, childcare subsidy services, childcare training and foster youth mentoring and development.

MERS Goodwill Industries

MERS Goodwill offers many services with a primary focus on employment and rehabilitation programs. They provide education and literacy services, employment services, skills training and career counseling. MERS Goodwill works with injured individuals, youth, veterans, ex-offenders, developmentally disabled and others.

Equus Workforce Solutions

Equus Workforce Solutions' services and strategies are grounded in whole family/family-centered approach, supporting families, adults, and young adults in moving toward their goals and greater economic prosperity. Their coaching approach exists in three tiers: 1) Family Stability, 2) Family Employability, and 3) Family Security. Equus empowers participants to stabilize their needs, gain employability skills and enable long-term security through meaningful employment and lifelong learning. Equus Workforce Solutions has provided services since 2017 and expanded services in 2019. Their whole family coaching approach aims to (1) aid needy families so that children may remain in their homes; (2) end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits through work, job preparation, and marriage; (3) reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and (4) promote the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. In addition, their approach includes coaching SkillUP participants and young adults aging out of the foster care system. To achieve this goal, local staff conduct comprehensive screening and assessments for family stability needs, intensive work readiness programs, training and education, and employment sector initiatives that target in-demand industries. Through this model they also support non-custodial parents who may not reside in the same home but share childcare responsibilities. They help with job opportunities leading to overall family security and offer Fatherhood Co-Parenting training.

Mississippi Caring Communities/Southern Missouri Works Project (SMWP)

SMWP is a collaborative effort between five (5) Missouri Community Partnerships with Mississippi County Caring Communities – Interagency Council as the lead agency with New Madrid County Family Resource Center, Pemiscot County Initiative Network, Dunklin County Caring Council and Ripley County Caring Communities.

The combined partnerships serving the southernmost part of the state purpose is to provide participants with support, educational outreach, work experience, job placement and other such resources to reduce the dependency on government benefits through placement in higher paying jobs. The Community Partnerships in SMWP collaborate with area resources, Community Based Organizations and agencies implementing approaches that deal with empowering the participant by providing career development tools, onsite job skills and educational classes/materials necessary to promote recipient/family economic growth.

Workforce Development Boards

In FY26, OWCI is contracting directly with the Workforce Development Boards (WDB) which allows for streamlined training, increased partner collaboration, consultation and continuous improvement. The WDB staff have access to reports on SNAP clients being served by DHEWD so referrals can be made to SkillUP. OWCI continues to utilize the MOJobs system which allows for co-enrollment and blended services. In addition, OWCI staff are appointed to boards and monthly calls with all partners including the WDBs. OWCI staff attend monthly board meetings where all WDB directors consult community stakeholders and other state agencies on the needs of Missouri citizens and how best to align E&T programs with employers and jobs.

Workforce Development Board of North Missouri

The WDB of North Missouri serves 34 counties in Missouri. The Board, in coordination with the area Chief Local Elected Officials, has the responsibility to spearhead a partnership targeted with improving and enhancing the readiness of the area's workforce, which supports area economic development and competition in the global economy of the 21st century. The WDB of North Missouri works hard to connect job seekers with employers and solve staffing issues and unemployment. Their workforce development programs bring employment opportunities closer to workers from different backgrounds and streamline the selection process for companies and organizations.

Ozark Region Workforce Development Board

The Ozark Region Workforce Investment Board serves 7 counties in the Springfield and Branson areas and is a partnership of local businesses, government, education, labor and human services agencies working together to provide a one-stop approach to the delivery of workforce development services. Through this partnership, over twenty separate local, federal and state employment, education and training programs are now available through a single point of contact under one roof.

Eastern Jackson County Workforce Development Board (EJAC WDB)

The Eastern Jackson County Workforce Development Board (EJAC WDB) supports workforce development in the region through its work with the Full Employment Council. The EJAC WDB provides oversight of employment and training programs in the area including development of operators and providers, budget administration and negotiation of local performance measures. The EJAC Board serves Independence, Blue Springs, Lee's Summit, Grandview, Raytown, Sugar Creek, Buckner, Grain Valley, Oak Grove, Lone Jack and other municipalities in eastern Jackson County through strategic partnerships with federal agencies, local chamber of commerce entities, organized labor groups, community-based organizations, and educational institutions.

Kansas City and Vicinity- Full Employment Council (FEC)

The FEC supplies employers with a skilled workforce by obtaining public and private sector employment for the unemployed and the underemployed residents of Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte, and Ray County. Job seeker services include skills training, job placement, supportive services, financial assistance, youth services, veterans' services, accessibility services, and many workshops throughout the year. The FEC focuses on 5 key areas that lead to family sustaining employment in the region: Information

Technology, Healthcare, Business and Financial Services, Logistics and Warehouse, and Advanced Manufacturing. Once training is completed staff assist job seekers in finding employment in one of these high demand career fields

South Central Workforce Investment Board

South Central Workforce Investment Board's mission is to support a system that will provide employers with a skilled workforce and will provide job seekers with access to jobs with increased earnings potential. Each local area (referred to as the South Central Region) includes the twelve counties of Wright, Texas, Reynolds, Wayne, Shannon, Douglas, Ozark, Howell, Oregon, Carter, Ripley and Butler.

Central Workforce Development Board

The Central Workforce Development Region works to strengthen communities through workforce development efforts, which includes providing employers a skilled workforce and helping job seekers access jobs and increase their skills. The region encompasses 19 counties throughout mid-Missouri, including Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Camden, Cole, Cooper, Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Howard, Laclede, Maries, Miller, Moniteau, Morgan, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski, and Washington

Workforce Development Board of Southeast Missouri

The Workforce Development Board of Southeast Missouri is a non-profit dedicated to creating a stronger workforce for Southeast Missouri. The goal is to connect participants with advanced training opportunities and exciting new career pathways in Southeast Missouri. This board is guided by their mission to promote a state of economic well-being by helping to create a skilled, diverse, motivated, and adaptable workforce.

Workforce Development Board of Southwest Missouri

The mission of Southwest Missouri's Workforce Development Board is to enrich the region's economy by preparing businesses and the workforce for global competitiveness. Be a progressive workforce intermediary that leverages resources to increase the value of the region's human capital portfolio (the workforce) to fuel economic momentum.

St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE)

The St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) is the City of St. Louis government agency that offers job seekers and businesses a variety of no-cost services related to employment, job training, and career advancement. SLATE aims to connect job seekers to training programs and employment, help employers diversify their workforce, and assists youth with career skills.

Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri

The Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri's mission is to provide services that match job seekers with employment opportunities as well as assist employers with finding qualified employees within their 13-county region. For over three decades, the Workforce Development Board of Western Missouri, Inc. has lead in the design, promotion, and oversight of innovative training, educational, and

employment solutions for today and tomorrow's workforce. As a result, we have gained the experience, expertise, and pro-active approaches that are necessary to resolve the workforce challenges of the region.

Jefferson/Franklin County Employment Consortium Workforce Development Board

Through its local Missouri Job Centers, Jefferson/Franklin Consortium offers employment and career training services for youth, adults and workers dislocated from their employment due to plant closings or workforce reductions.

(11) The relationship between the State agency and other organizations it plans to coordinate with for the provision of services, including organizations in the Statewide workforce development system, if available. Copies of contracts must be available for inspection;

OWCI has contracts or agreements with Missouri's Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA), Area Resources for Community and Human Services (ARCHS), Missouri Community Action Network (Missouri CAN), Mississippi Caring Communities (MCC), Community Partnership of Southeast Missouri, and MERS Goodwill Excel Centers (Adult High Schools) to operate SkillUP. In addition, services are provided through MWA providers including Equus, MERS Goodwill, LINC, and Better Family Life OWCI (BFL)

(12) The availability, if appropriate, of E&T programs for Indians living on reservations after the State agency has consulted in good faith with appropriate tribal organizations;

Missouri does not have any state or federally recognized tribes.

(13) If a conciliation process is planned, the procedures that will be used when an individual fails to comply with an E&T program requirement. Include the length of the conciliation period; and

N/A to Missouri

(14) The payment rates for child care established in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, and based on local market rate surveys.

As of August 28, 2021, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) became the lead agency for the CCDBG for the State of Missouri. The Early Childhood and Prevention Services Section combined with other sections within Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and DESE to create the Office of Childhood. The Department of Social Services, Family Support Division will still continue to determine family eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy program.

Missouri has four levels of child care benefits. The first level, Traditional Child Care, is determined at 150% of the FPL. Transitional Child Care (TCC) level 1 is determined between 151% to 185% of the FPL.; TTC2 is determined at 186% to

215% of the FPL.; TTC3 is determined between 216% to 242% of the FPL. Participants are required to pay a daily sliding scale fee based on the level of eligibility. The maximum daily sliding fee at the traditional level (up to 150% FPL) is \$5 per day and the maximum daily sliding fee at the transitional level (up to 242% FPL) is \$10 per day. Additional information regarding the child care program and income guidelines can be found at [Child Care Subsidy News, Updates, & Information | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(mo.gov\)](#).

(15) The combined (Federal/State) State agency reimbursement rate for transportation costs and other expenses reasonably necessary and directly related to participation incurred by E&T participants. If the State agency proposes to provide different reimbursement amounts to account for varying levels of expenses, for instance for greater or lesser costs of transportation in different areas of the State, it must include them here.

OWCI instituted a \$1,500 per person cap per rolling calendar year. If a participant needs to exceed this amount, the provider will need prior approval from OWCI SkillUP staff.

SkillUP clients are eligible for WIOA supportive services when they qualify as a TA allowable expense.

TRE payments are allowable only when a transportation cost is incurred and a need is demonstrated. TRE payments may not exceed \$15 per day. TRE payments are issued only for the dates and times a participant is attending a work or training activity. There is no limit on the amount of TRE paid for a participant, but all TRE payments must be reasonable and necessary.

The maximum amount of WRE that can be approved by a Case Manager is \$750 in a 12month rolling period. The 12-month rolling period begins immediately upon the first authorized payment of WRE. If circumstances require additional WRE within the 12month rolling period, a supervisor must approve the request. Approval of any amount above \$1,500 requires approval from OWCI.

(16) Information about expenses the State agency proposes to reimburse. FNS must be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reimbursements before they are implemented.

FNS 100% Funds	FNS 50/50 Funds	TANF 100% Funds
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• Outreach • Planning • Implementation • Operations • Participant tuition/fees	• Outreach • Planning • Implementation • Operations • Participant tuition/fees • Supportive Services TRE /WRE	• Outreach • Planning • Implementation • Operations • Participant tuition/fees • Supportive Services - o TRE /WRE
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Providers must use the most cost-effective service and *only* be provided so the participant can gain employment. Supportive Services must be necessary, reasonable, and cannot have another possible source of funding. Supportive services are only allowed to support employment and training activities. Providers are not required to provide all services listed; providers should follow their own policies on the type of services provided. Participant needs to pay as much as he/she can.

Supportive Services Y=Allowable N=Not Allowable			
Items	Explanations	TANF funds	FNS 50/50 funds
Automobile repair(s)	• Used for the primary vehicle owned by the participant. The service provider must request proof of ownership (i.e.: a title), proof of insurance, and a valid driver's license. • On a case-by-case basis, it can be used for a vehicle the participant will ride in or drive to fully participate in work activities: - o This should be carefully investigated as to why the participant cannot obtain his/her own vehicle (i.e. doesn't have driver's license, etc.) or other transportation. - o Verify this will be a long-term solution or lead to a long-term solution (i.e. If WRE of \$50 puts brakes on the mother's car, the participant will have transportation for three months at which time the participant will get their income tax and purchase a used automobile.) - o The owner of the vehicle must provide proof of ownership, proof of insurance, and a valid driver's license if the owner is transporting the participant. - o Owner of the vehicle must sign a statement that he/she will give this person rides as needed to participate in work activities or allow the participant to drive the car for a certain period of time.	Y	Y

Items	Explanations	TANF funds	FNS 50/50 funds
Automobile repair(s) continued	- Two-parent households: if both parents are fully participating or agree to fully participate, the WRE can be combined to make repairs. - For repairs over \$100, or if staff question the cost, the participant must submit three estimates for the cost of the repairs. It is left to the discretion of the service provider if the estimates must come from certain vendors that may be more reasonable in cost. - WRE funds can be used to purchase automobile parts to be installed by someone other than an auto repair shop; however, the case manager should verify the individual who will install the parts is qualified to do the type of work required. - The mechanic or other authorized person should verify, to the best of his/her knowledge, this repair(s) will make the vehicle operable and is not just a short-term fix. - Diagnostic testing is allowable if the mechanic is unsure of the problem and there is no way to determine the cost unless this is completed.	Y	Y
Bicycle or Bicycle Parts	Allowable if used for transportation for work activities.	Y	Y
Car Insurance	- Allowable up to three months for full coverage insurance total per 12 month period (if the participant only needs liability, this is acceptable) since he/she will likely need other supports for going to work or school. - Encourage the participant to pay a portion of the insurance as he/she will have to make the payments in the future. - Only pay one month at a time to verify full participation is met.	Y	N

Items	Explanations	TANF funds	FNS 50/50 funds
Childcare Registration Fees	- Does not count toward the annual limit. - Provider does not have to be licensed or registered to request this fee; however, the childcare provider must have a written policy requiring this fee for all families.	Y	N
College Application and Entry Test Fees	Allowable for short-term training less than a year.	Y	N
College Fees	- Participant has an unpaid fee from a college that must be paid in order to enter a training program (e.g. Lab Fee of \$150). - The participant is unable to resolve with the college on their own. - This does not include student loans.	Y	N
Criminal Background Check, Drug Testing and Fingerprints	Must be required by the employer for all employees in order to participate in a work activity.	Y	Y
Dental and Vision Expenses	- Participant must provide documentation that this will not be covered by MO HealthNet or private health care (i.e., statement showing not eligible for MO HealthNet; denial per dentist/doctor office; etc.). - Cannot be used for another participant, even if he/she is married to this person. - Includes basic dental cleaning, vision exams and low cost glasses.	Y	Y
Driver's License Fees	Per the Missouri Department of Revenue, the length of the license and the fee associated with it depends on driver's age: if the driver is under or over 20 years of age.	Y	N
Gas Cards, Mileage and Bus Passes	- Participant must submit weekly claim for expenses. - Participants must supply documentation to verify expenses. - Maximum is \$15 per day.	Y	Y

GED or HiSET Test Fees	Allowable for participants without a high school diploma.	Y	Y
Items	Explanations	TANF funds	FNS 50/50 funds
Licensing Fees	- Only allowed for a one-year period. - Can include safety inspection & transfer fees	Y	N
Legal costs, fees or fines	Over \$150 per calendar year requires DSS/OWCI approval.	Y	N
Mental Health Services	Never allowed	N	N
Mortgage Payments	- Can be paid in extenuating circumstances for short- term emergencies. - Participant must provide documentation (i.e.: bill, loan, etc.) showing this is his/her responsibility.	Y	N
Personal Computers, laptops, and tablets	- Need must be documented - Must align with IEP - Equipment may be provided through a Laptop Loaner Program instead of purchasing	Y	Y
Personal Hygiene Items	- Purchase of a reasonable amount of items: - Soap - Deodorant - Toothpaste and mouthwash	Y	Y
Personal Property Taxes	- Done on a very limited basis, (i.e.: the participant has to pay the taxes to obtain/license a vehicle). - Only includes personal property tax for the vehicle needed for transportation and does not include payment for other vehicles, a house, etc. - If there is more than one vehicle on the property tax, verify the participant has the money to pay the rest of the bill and go with him/her to pay it, or have them mail the payment from the office, etc.	Y	N
Phone Cards	Participant must use the card exclusively for activities that lead to self-sufficiency.	Y	N
	Can be paid in extenuating circumstances for short- term emergencies.		

Rent/Utilities	Participant must provide a copy of the lease agreement with his/her name as the person responsible for payment.	Y	Y
SATOP Class	Can be paid when this is a condition for the participant to get his/her license back.	Y	Y
Items	Explanations	TANF funds	FNS 50/50 funds
Sales Tax	- Do not use for sales tax on the WRE purchase as the WRE item(s) is tax exempt. - Provide the appropriate tax-exempt documentation so sales tax is not charged.	Y	Y
Startup Costs or Operational Costs for a business	- Requires DSS/OWCI approval - Tools, supplies, etc. necessary. For example, rakes, gas, shovels for lawn care business.	Y	Y
Student Loans	Never allowed	N	N
Union Dues	Limited to once per union membership. Example: A participant joins a carpenter's union, the fee can be paid. Later the participant joins a HVAC union, the fee can be paid. However, it cannot be paid to the carpenters union twice even if it is for different periods of time.	Y	Y
Work and/or School Supplies	- Work tools required by the employer. - School supplies if required for the class. - Computer software required for a specific class. - Text books if required for the class.	Y	Y
Work Clothes, Uniforms and Shoes	- WRE funds are not intended to purchase an entire wardrobe. - Necessary clothing should be purchased at the most reasonable price. - There is not a stipulation on how many of any piece of clothing may be purchased since this is case specific and there are many possible combinations of needs. - Uniforms must be required and not provided by the employer.	Y	Y

(17) FOR EACH COMPONENT THAT IS EXPECTED TO INCLUDE 100 OR MORE PARTICIPANTS, REPORTING MEASURES THAT THE STATE WILL COLLECT AND INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL REPORT IN PARAGRAPH (C)(17) OF THIS SECTION. SUCH MEASURES MAY INCLUDE:

A. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO RECEIVED E&T SERVICES AND ARE IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT SUBSEQUENT TO THE RECEIPT OF THOSE SERVICES;

B. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO OBTAIN A RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL, A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, OR A REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OR ITS RECOGNIZED EQUIVALENT), WHILE PARTICIPATING IN, OR WITHIN 1 YEAR AFTER RECEIVING E&T SERVICES;

C. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE IN AN EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAM THAT IS INTENDED TO LEAD TO A RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL, A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP AN ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAM, A REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OR ITS RECOGNIZED EQUIVALENT), OR UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT;

D. MEASURES DEVELOPED TO ASSESS THE SKILLS ACQUISITION OF E&T PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS THAT REFLECT THE GOALS OF THE SPECIFIC COMPONENTS INCLUDING THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE MEETING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS OR ARE GAINING SKILLS LIKELY TO LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

E. OTHER INDICATORS APPROVED BY FNS IN THE E&T STATE PLAN.

Component	Outcome Measure	Methodology including the timeframes being reported
JST- Job Search Training	Percentage of participants that obtained employment after component participation	Number of participants who obtained employment out of the total number of participants in JST for FFY26.
SJS-Supervised Job Search	Percentage of participants that obtained employment after component participation	Number of participants who obtained employment out of the total number of participants in SJS for FFY26.
EPB- Educational Programs, Basic Education and/or Foundational Skills Instruction (includes High School Equivalency programs)	Percentage of participants that obtained employment after component participation	Number of participants who obtained employment out of the total number of participants in EPB for FFY26.
EPC-Career and/or Technical Training or other Vocational Training	Percentage of participants that obtained employment after component participation	Number of participants who obtained employment out of the total number of participants in EPC for FFY26.
EPWRT- Work Readiness Training	Percentage of participants that obtained employment after component participation	Number of participants who obtained employment out of the total number of participants in EPWRT for FFY26.

(a) ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD) [28]

1. State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) subject to the 3- month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:[28] 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(7)

1. ITS PLEDGE TO OFFER A QUALIFYING ACTIVITY TO ALL AT-RISK ABAWD APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS;

Missouri will not be a pledge state.

2. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FULFILLING ITS PLEDGE;

N/A

3. A DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MEET PLEDGE REQUIREMENTS;

N/A

4. A DISCUSSION OF ITS CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO SERVE AT-RISK ABAWDs;

N/A

5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION;

14,373

6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT

The following components are provided through SkillUP:

Work -Based Learning Programs:

- On-the-job training
- Pre-apprenticeship
- Apprenticeship
- Internship

Educational Programs:

- Basic/Foundational Skills
- Career/technical education or other vocational training
- English Language Acquisition
- Integrated Education and Training/Bridge Programs
- Work Readiness Training

Non-Education, Non-Work Components:

- Supervised Job search
- Job Search training
- Self-Employment Training
- Job Retention

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

Jobs for Veterans' State Grants

(OMB Control Number: 1293-0017)

Components of the Jobs for Veterans State Grants State Plan

Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) recipients must provide a four-year state plan as a condition for the receipt of annual funding in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c). This plan must include responses to each of the components below.

a. Describe how the state intends to provide employment, training, and job placement services to veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG program (i.e., virtually and in-person).

The primary objective of Jobs for Veterans State Grants program is to develop and support activities to increase employment and job training opportunities for veterans and eligible persons. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist and Consolidated (CODL) staff will provide individualized career services to Eligible Veterans and Eligible Persons who possess a qualifying employment barrier (QEB), as well as Additional Populations authorized by Congress.

The provision of individualized career services will result in:

- Successful transition into civilian employment for separating service members
- Successful reintegration into the workforce for the homeless
- Reduced recidivism for incarcerated veterans

Missouri participates in mobilization and demobilization briefings for the National Guard/Reserve soldiers and their spouses. Missouri collaborates with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), Veterans Commission, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Department of Corrections, Department of Mental Health, Federal Bureau of Prisons and other public organizations to identify veterans with SBE and provide them individualized career services with the goal of meaningful employment.

In addition, Missouri operates the Career Skills Program (CSP) in conjunction with Fort Leonard Wood to place exiting service members into internships with civilian employers. A LVER is dedicated to this program, as well as a representative from the Department of Defense SkillBridge program.

Missouri has a very small Native American veteran population and does not have any tribal lands.

Missouri places full- and half-time CODLs in Job Centers to serve the needs of the veterans and eligible persons and employers based on the needs of the Job Center's service delivery area.

Missouri provides individualized career services to targeted veterans and eligible persons through a variety of means. DVOPs and CODLs conduct outreach to Missouri Probation and Parole offices and prisons to encourage the referral of veterans to the Job Center for assistance with their employment needs.

DVOPs and CODLs will provide itinerant services to eligible populations in the community, provided the individual is registered in the MIS and has been screened and determined both eligible for and interested in individualized career services from a DVOP. Locations where

itinerant services may be provided include but are not limited to military installations, National Guard and Reserve component armories, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities, homeless shelters, prisons, and other sites as appropriate and agreed to by impacted parties.

As established in legislation, the JVSG program is but one component of an umbrella of programs that are required by law to provide priority of service to veterans. The DVOPs, CODLs, and LVERs funded by the JVSG fill a particular niche in the overall program of services to veterans. As indicated in Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) policy, DVOPs and CODLs provide individualized career services to veterans and eligible persons with QEB. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides for the provision of individualized career services to certain eligible participants such as veterans and eligible spouses. Likewise, the DVOP and CODL staff should be used to target specialized individualized career services to those veterans and eligible persons with QEB who are most in need.

It is vital to the success of the veteran and eligible person job seeker that an effective partnership between the DVOP, CODL, LVER, Job Center programs, other federal, state, and local agencies and veteran organizations are fostered and maintained.

DVOP and CODL specialists should engage with service providers in their local community to:

- Maximize the number of participants referred to the state's workforce delivery system who are both eligible for and interested in DVOP services
- Enhance outcomes for participants the DVOP refers to other providers
- Strengthen community awareness of the array of services available through the workforce development system

The goal of DVOP and CODL outreach is to connect with community resource providers, inform them about the individualized career services available to eligible veterans/persons through the case management framework, and encourage referrals to the local Job Centers.

The DVOPs and CODLs share case management for veterans enrolled in WIOA and other programs with the providers of those programs. Dual case management ensures maximum cooperation between programs and enhanced employment opportunities for veterans and eligible persons with employment barriers. Common measures, business knowledge gained through outreach, and a shared interest in exiting participants at an appropriate time makes it feasible for multiple staff to assist with job search and job development activities.

LVERs and CODLs participate on business teams as outlined within the workforce region's "single point of contact plan". The plan outlines the Region's strategy to promote the area's workforce services, including promotion of veterans and eligible persons among employers. This approach maximizes opportunities to promote the veteran and eligible person as trained, skilled, and reliable candidates to promote to the employer. All staff who conduct employer contacts promote veterans and veteran programs and document their contacts in the state's management information system (MIS).

Because the JVSG grant provides funds to exclusively serve veterans, other eligible persons as defined at 38 U.S.C. 4101(5), VPLs 05-24. Missouri will not assign DVOP, CODL or LVER staff to functions that may conflict with this purpose or which conflict with Title 38, Chapter 41 requirements, applicable regulations (20 CFR 1001, et. seq.). They will not provide services to non-veteran customers or be assigned to tasks that will lead non-veterans to request or expect to receive services from the DVOP, CODL or LVER. Contact with customers who are not veterans is

inevitable. When such contact occurs, the DVOP, CODL or LVER will exercise tact and courtesy in directing the customer to the appropriate service.

Missouri's MIS (MoJobs) provides reports identifying veterans registered with no services, disabled veterans, and all veterans registered within a county. Reports are also generated that depict Job Center staff activity including referrals, services provided, employer contacts, and job developments. Those reports, as well as the 9173 reports from Workforce Integrated Program System (WIPS), Managers Report on Services to Veterans, and the required Self Assessments monitored by local and Central Office management to verify the provisions of the Veterans State Plan are being observed.

Missouri conducts monthly internal audits of the JVSG program and looks at the veterans and eligible persons served to ensure that only those with QEB are receiving services from the DVOPs and CODLs, as well as to ensure they are receiving individualized career services through the case management framework.

All services will be available both virtually and in person, depending on the needs of the customer.

b. List the populations to be served by Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and consolidated position staff, including the eligibility criteria for referral for DVOP services.

POPULATIONS TO BE SERVED BY DVOPS AND CODLS

Eligible Veteran

An eligible veteran is a person who meets one of the following criteria:

1. Served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days and was discharged with other than a dishonorable discharge; or
2. Was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability; or
3. Was a member of a reserve component under an order to active duty—pursuant to 10 U.S.C. §§ 12301(a), (d), or (g); 12302; or 12304—who served on active duty during a period of war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized and was discharged or released from such duty with other than a dishonorable discharge; or
4. Was discharged or released from active duty by reason of a sole survivorship discharge.

Eligible Person

An eligible person is:

1. The spouse of any person who died of a service-connected disability
2. The spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance under this chapter, is listed, pursuant to section 556 of title 37 and regulations issued thereunder, by the Secretary concerned in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than ninety days:
 - a. missing in action
 - b. captured in line of duty by a hostile force
 - c. forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power

3. The spouse of any person who has a total disability permanent in nature resulting from a service-connected disability, or the spouse of a veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

Additional Populations

Congress has authorized DVOPs and CODLs to serve, and LVERs to work with employers on behalf of, the following additional populations:

1. Transitioning Service Members (TSM) who, at the time of enrollment have participated in any part of the Transition Assistance Program, including self-paced online modules and Individualized Initial Counseling.
2. Wounded, ill, or injured members of the Armed Forces who are receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units.
3. Spouses or other family caregivers of those wounded, ill, or injured service members described in subparagraph 2 above.

Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEB)

1. Has a disability, which may include any of the following:
 - a. Special disabled veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(1) as a veteran who is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for a disability rated at 30 percent or more, or rated at 10 or 20 percent in the case of a veteran who has been determined to have a serious employment handicap; or person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
 - b. Disabled veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(3) as a veteran who is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs^{1F2}; or a person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
 - c. Other disability. Eligible veterans and eligible persons who self-identify as having a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12102.
2. Is a Vietnam-era veteran, as defined by 38 U.S.C. § 4211(2) as an eligible veteran any part of whose active military, naval, or air service was during the Vietnam era, as defined by 38 U.S.C. § 101(29).
3. Is a recently separated veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(6) as a veteran who was discharged or released from active duty within the last three years.
4. Has been referred for employment services by a representative of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
5. Is experiencing homelessness, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302(a) and (b)).

6. Is justice-involved, as defined in WIOA Section 3(38), 29 U.S.C. § 3102(38) (definition of “offender”).
7. Is between the ages of 18–24 years of age at the time of enrollment.
8. Is educationally disadvantaged, meaning that the individual lacks a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.
9. Is economically disadvantaged, which means any of the following:
 - a. Meets the definition of a low-income individual in WIOA Section 3(36), 29 U.S.C. § 3102(36).
 - b. Unemployed.
 - c. Heads of single-parent households containing at least one dependent child.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR REFERRAL FOR DVOP/CODL SERVICES

Individuals who have been screened by non-JVSG staff or the State’s management information system (MIS) and who meet the following criteria will be referred for DVOP/CODL services.

- Are interested in receiving one or more individualized career services, and
- Meet at least one of the following two criteria:
 - Are defined as an eligible veteran or eligible person and are experiencing at least one of the qualifying employment barriers listed below; or
 - Are members of additional populations eligible for DVOP specialist services as authorized by the current annual appropriations act, as outlined below.

c. Describe the roles and responsibilities assigned to Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, Local Veterans’ Employment Representative (LVER) staff, and consolidated DVOP/LVER positions by the state. These must be consistent with 38 U.S.C. 4103A and 4104.

The DVOPs and CODLs provide individualized career services to eligible veterans and eligible persons with QEB and additional populations authorized by Congress who require such services to obtain employment. These services are also provided to underemployed participants who require such services to obtain or retain employment which will lead to self-sufficiency. The DVOPs and CODLs place maximum emphasis on assisting veterans who are disabled, economically disadvantaged, and/or educationally disadvantaged.

The DVOPs and CODLs facilitate the provision of direct services to eligible veterans and other eligible persons requiring individualized career services by providing career guidance, counseling, additional assessments to identify training and employment needs, develop veteran employment plans, conduct job development, and provide job search assistance. In addition, they conduct outreach activities to identify resources to which to refer veterans to address employment barriers. DVOPs and CODLs maintain consistent contact with the veteran or eligible person while services are being provided, as well as after employment is obtained.

Serving Chapter 31 Veterans

When the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program refers a participant to the state’s designated Central Point of Contact (CPOC), the CPOC determines the closest Missouri Job Center (MJC) to the veteran’s residence and forwards the referral to the job center supervisor. For those who have not been screened for JVSG eligibility, the

supervisor assigns a non-JVSG staff to screen the individual. Those who are eligible for JVSG services are referred to the appropriate DVOP or CODL for employment services. The DVOP or CODL contacts the veteran to describe the support and assistance available to them and invites them to come to the Job Center to discuss their job search as it relates to the training and education received. Referrals to other supportive services may be made as needed to help the veteran overcome any additional employment barriers identified by the DVOP or CODL. DVOPs work with LVERs and CODLs to find employment opportunities in the career fields identified as suitable by VR&E staff. The DVOP or CODL staff continues to maintain contact with the veteran for at least 60 days following placement in employment.

DVOP and CODL Specialists

All Missouri DVOP and CODL specialists receive training in how to facilitate individualized career services for disabled veterans with employment barriers through the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) within 18 months of their hire. Additionally, all new DVOPs and CODLs receive training from the JVSG Training Coordinator and/or Regional Support Specialists, which includes the history of the Wagner-Peyser Act, Employment Services, and the JVSG program. This training also includes local operations, as they relate to all active and current Veterans' Program Letters (VPLs) and Chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38. In addition, they job shadow a current DVOP or CODL for a minimum of one week. Other training includes the annual training conference in conjunction with the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) Summit, annual regional training, and Registered Apprenticeship training. This training includes staff development and skills improvement, integrated service models and their unique roles, effective individualized career service delivery models, and other program-related information sharing, strategic planning, performance measuring, and systems training. Lastly, local Job Center training is provided by local managers and the One-Stop partners, which highlight location specific practices and our partners' operations.

Primary Duties

DVOP and CODL staff are primarily assigned to facilitate individualized career services through the case management framework and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, veterans with a qualifying employment barrier (QEB), and other categories of eligible persons in accordance with VPL 05-24. These individualized career services include a combination of the following: career guidance; comprehensive assessment; veteran employment plans; job development contacts; referral to jobs; referral to training and supportive services; outreach activities to connect with resource providers. DVOPs and CODLs maintain consistent contact with the veteran or eligible person while services are being provided, as well as during follow-up once employment is obtained.

DVOP Targeted Services

The State of Missouri monitors this activity through monthly and quarterly reports that indicate who, when, and what outreach, services, meetings were conducted through the state's Labor Exchange system. In accordance with VPL 01-22, Attachments 1 and 4 (JVSG Performance Targets), Missouri utilizes the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS) to capture data to ensure compliance with regulatory guidance for performance indicators. To be deemed successful in these activities, the DVOP is required to occupy 85% of the 40 Full Time Employee working hours per week to complete the above tasks. The remaining 15% will be dedicated to individual DVOP

activities, such as training, traveling, reports, notes and personal capacity building related to the DVOP activities. Full-time CODLs are required to spend 40% of the 40-hour work week performing DVOP activities and 10% on such things as training, traveling, reports, notes, and professional development. Surveys are sent to individuals who receive services from the DVOP or CODL; the results are used to determine the level of quality in the above activity.

DVOP and CODL Integration

Missouri has integrated all DVOP and CODL specialists into the One-Stop system by assigning one or more DVOP or CODL specialists to each of the 13 Workforce Development Regions.

Additionally, the Job Center one-stop partners are included in the intake process for DVOP services. Upon entering the Job Center, individuals are asked if they are a veteran, transitioning service member, or spouse of a veteran. If the answer is “yes”, Job Center staff utilize the “Veteran Eligibility Screening Tool” to determine whether the veteran or eligible person is both interested in AND eligible for JVSG services. Those who meet both criteria are referred to the DVOP or CODL using the MoJobs referral. Upon receipt of the MoJobs referral, the DVOP or CODL contacts the veteran or eligible person to provide individualized career services. Veterans who do not qualify for DVOP services or are not interested in individualized career services but still require employment services are provided services by non-JVSG Job Center staff. Job Center staff may consult JVSG staff regarding military occupations, the DD-214 and other military documents, and military language translation in addition to other employment or service-related questions. A DVOP specialist is assigned to the Affiliate Job Center located on the Fort Leonard Wood installation. JVSG staff also conduct outreach to Whiteman Air Force Base in Knob Noster, MO.

Identifying and Assessing Veterans for Basic and Individual Career Services

Individuals entering the Job Center are met with signage and are encouraged to identify themselves as veterans or eligible persons. Additionally, a Job Center representative conducts screening to identify veterans and eligible persons with a qualifying employment barrier (QEB), as well as additional populations, such as transitioning service members. Once an individual is identified and determined eligible for AND interested in JVSG services, they are referred to the DVOP or CODL specialist for individualized career services, based on the individual’s needs.

The DVOP and CODL specialists utilize a case management process in which they provide the following services: comprehensive assessments, individualized employment counseling, career guidance, and the development of an employment plan. This individualized employment plan will include appropriate apprenticeship, on-job training or education opportunities needed to help the veteran overcome employment barriers related to skills, education, and training. The DVOP or CODL will also assess the need for additional non-individualized career services, which may require the DVOP or CODL to refer veteran to local partners, agencies, and other employment and training program providers. The DVOP or CODL will maintain consistent contact with the veteran or eligible person during the case management process and for a follow-up period post-employment.

LVER and CODL Staff

All Missouri LVER and CODL staff receive extensive training on how to engage employers through the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) within 18 months of their hire. Additionally, all new LVERs and CODLs receive training from the JVSG Training Coordinator and/or Regional

Support Specialists, which includes the history of the Wagner-Peyser Act, Employment Services, and the JVSG program. This training also includes local operations, as they relate to all active and current Veterans' Program Letters (VPLs) and Chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38. In addition, they will job shadow a current LVER or CODL for a minimum of one week. Other training includes the annual training conference in conjunction with the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) Summit, annual regional training, and Registered Apprenticeship training. This training includes staff development and skills improvement, integrated service models and their unique roles, effective employer service delivery models, and other program-related information sharing, strategic planning, performance measuring, and systems training. Lastly, local Job Center training is provided by local managers and the One-Stop partners, which highlight location specific practices and our partners' operations.

Primary Duties

The primary role of LVER or CODL staff at the Job Centers is to conduct outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans and eligible persons in gaining employment. LVERs and CODLs promote, plan, and participate in job fairs and seminars for employers. They also promote veterans or eligible persons as job-ready candidates who have highly marketable skills and experience. Missouri LVERs and CODLs advocate for veterans by promoting employment and training opportunities, coordinating with other business outreach representatives in the Region to facilitate and promote employment, conducting workshops, identifying job opportunities, establishing job groups in conjunction with employers, and leveraging other employment opportunities for veterans or eligible persons. Missouri LVERs and CODLs establish, maintain, and facilitate regular contact with federal contractors, unions, apprenticeship programs, businesses, and business organizations. LVERs and CODLs also provide educational training to Job Center staff, additional employer-based training, and other outreach services, in accordance with current guidance that relates to LVER reporting and performance.

Employer Outreach

LVER and CODL staff establish, maintain and facilitate regular contact with employers, which includes federal contractors, and promote the advantages of hiring veterans, while seeking other employment and training opportunities for veterans and eligible persons. As part of their responsibility, LVER and CODL staff advocate, on behalf of all veterans and eligible persons, to businesses and labor unions to employ and provide on-the-job training and registered apprenticeship programs. They also advise employers of veteran's issues and plan and participate in job fairs to promote veterans and eligible persons to employers. The overall outcome expected from employer contacts is to increase employment, promotion, and retention for veterans and eligible persons. Additionally, a schedule is created by the LVER or CODL, approved by their supervisor, for employer outreach. These measures are in place to ensure that the LVER or CODL is out of the office and searching for employment opportunities for veterans. With the intent to provide quality services, these measures also provide a basis for which the state manager and their supervisor can follow-up with the business to ensure that their needs are met. LVERs and CODLs are encouraged to use modern technology, such as social media, to locate employers who utilize these systems as their primary means to locate qualified candidates. Upon identifying employment opportunities, the LVERs and CODLs are encouraged to outreach to these businesses and promote hiring job-ready veterans and eligible persons. This method has been successful, and runs parallel with many Missouri businesses, which have changed their job posting or searching

methods. However, LVER and CODLs are made aware of the importance and are encouraged to primarily make employer contacts in person.

LVERs are required to spend 85% of the 40-hour work week performing these activities and 15% on such things as training, traveling, reports, notes, and professional development. Full-time CODLs are required to spend 40% of the 40-hour work week performing LVER activities and 10% on such things as training, traveling, reports, notes, and professional development.

CODL Staffing

Missouri assigns CODL staff to Job Centers as determined necessary and appropriate to optimize the delivery of individualized career services to veterans and eligible persons, as well as to provide employer services to promote hiring veterans and eligible persons. Half-time CODLs are utilized where there is a need for JVSG services, but not to the extent that a full-time CODL is warranted. This provides additional flexibility to allow the CODL to provide services to veterans and eligible persons outside the Job Center, by charging the time taken to register the individual and screen them for JVSG eligibility to non-JVSG funding. Half-time CODLs charge 50 – 100% of their time to JVSG and up to 50% of their time to non-JVSG funding.

d. Demonstrate the manner in which DVOP, LVER and consolidated DVOP/LVER staff are integrated into the state's employment service delivery systems or American Job Center (AJC). This demonstration should show active engagement between JVSG and other AJC staff, such as through participation in staff meetings and cross-training opportunities.

JVSG-funded services are not only a mandatory partner under WIOA, but Missouri considers these services to be a key feature of the local One-Stop system. The local area WIOA Plan governs the partnership between the One-Stop system and JVSG-funded services. The plan describes how veterans will be provided priority in job placement and training activities, how case management services will be provided to veterans and eligible persons, and details linkages with Department of Veterans Affairs, Missouri Veterans Commission and other veteran service organizations. Missouri has integrated DVOP and CODL specialists into the one-stop system by assigning one or more to each workforce region. DVOP and CODL specialists work with local one-stop partners to provide services to veterans, with the primary focus on providing individualized career services to disabled veterans, eligible veterans, and other eligible persons with significant barriers to employment. All workforce regions have an integrated, business services function responsible for connecting local employers to the local one-stop system, to include job ready candidates. This team also has as a major function ensuring that all Job Center services continuously improve and are responsive to the needs of residents, employers, partner agencies and organizations and the local economy. DVOP, CODL specialists and LVER staff act as individual representatives within this service team and distribute JVSG information to one-stop partners, veteran service organizations, employers, and community partners. These individual representatives focus on the individualized career services, employer and employment services, and the provision of services specific to their individual roles and responsibilities. The intent is

to integrate within these groups and open all avenues of assistance to Veterans and to assist the Job Center, Veteran Service Officers, and community groups with services to veterans. The LVER, DVOP, or CODL are often sought out by staff for their knowledge and resources of other local Veteran Service Organizations, specifically when staff meet with a veteran who may not have an QEB but have a unique need for assistance.

Integration into One-Stop System

The blueprint for integration and coordination of services to veterans is provided through State policy and narrative explanations contained in local area WIOA plans. Ongoing oversight of services to veterans is conducted to ensure these plans are carried out. To be approved, these plans must describe:

1. how available resources (WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and others) are pooled within the one-stop system to provide core and individualized career services for veterans;
2. the process used to accomplish intake, assessment, registration, and follow-up services for veterans;
3. a description of mediated and non-mediated services available to veterans and other eligible persons;
4. how veterans are provided priority in placement services and activities, funded by the Department of Labor in whole or in part; and
5. a detailed description of how case management services are provided to veterans.

e. Describe the state's performance incentive award program to encourage individuals and/or employment service offices to improve and/or achieve excellence in the provision of services to veterans, including:

1. the nomination and selection process for all performance incentive awards to individuals and/or offices;

The guidelines of VPL 1-22 will be followed in the selection of awardees. Job Centers or teams will be nominated based on their efforts that demonstrate outstanding outreach on behalf of veterans who have barriers to employment, programs that promote employment opportunities for veterans within the local community or enhance provider awareness of veterans' issues and resources. The following list will be used as examples for submitting nominations:

- Development of a program for which the impact may not be directly measurable (e.g., a resume skill-building program)
- Promotion of entry into federal employment
- Promotion of HIRE Veterans Medallion Program
- Outstanding case management
- Exemplary job fair support
- Vocational rehabilitation marketing
- Direct marketing to employers

- Exceptional performance beyond job requirements or outside of established performance goals
- Ideas that are implemented to improve the system, improve performance, reduce time or cost, or to promote collaboration
- Performance measures for the current program year
- Outreach/community relations efforts, e.g., Chambers of Commerce, employers
- Generation of positive publicity for a local office
- Increase awareness of relevant issues within the employer community
- Enhancement of on-the-job training, customized job training, or compensated work therapy
- Efforts to assist hard-to-place populations (e.g., veterans experiencing homelessness, incarceration, disability, or recent separation from service)
- Collaborative success in providing all services to veterans, which may include success in
 - employer relations and “great customer service” to veteran clients
 - Other pre-defined achievements or measures

Awardees will be selected based upon objective and subjective performance data. Nominations will be called for with a June deadline and will be based upon performance during the current program year. There will be no numeric limitation on the number of nominees. The nominations will remain anonymous; only the Veteran Program Manager will know the identity of the nominations. A panel consisting of individuals selected by the Director of Office of Workforce Development will review and numerically rank all nominations. The three top-ranked Job Centers or teams will receive the cash award. The deadline for selection will be no later than June 30. The Director of the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, Office of Workforce Development will review and approve the selected nominees before the presentation of awards.

2. the approximate number and value of cash awards using the one percent incentive award allocation;

Three (3) winning Job Centers will receive a cash award in the amount of one-third of the allocation, to be used in accordance with guidelines set by the Director of Office of Workforce Development.

Funds not expended will be recaptured by USDOL VETS.

3. the general nature and approximate value of non-cash performance incentive awards to be charged to the base allocation; and

The three winning Job Centers or teams will be recognized and presented with a plaque during the annual veterans’ conference.

4. any challenges the state may anticipate to carrying out a performance incentive award program as mandated by 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c). This should include any state laws or policies that prohibit such awards, if applicable. Describe the state's efforts in overcoming those challenges.

None.

f. List the performance targets for direct services to veterans provided by JVSG staff, as measured by participants':

- employment rate in the second quarter after exit from the program;
- employment rate in the fourth quarter after exit; and
- median earnings in the second quarter after exit.

Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit 59%

Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit 57%

Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit \$6,000

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

Note: Below is information about the employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) that is included in the WIOA Combined State Plan. The complete CSBG State Plan is submitted directly to the Federal agency that administers that program and is collected under OMB Control Number: 0970-0382.

Where CSBG is included in the Combined State Plan, the State CSBG Lead Agency (as designated by the chief executive of the State under the requirements of section 676(a) of the CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. 9908(a)) will coordinate plans for employment and training activities under CSBG as part of a larger antipoverty and workforce development strategy.

As part of the Combined State Plan, the State CSBG Lead Agency must:

- b) Describe how the State and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities through Statewide and local WIOA workforce development systems; and may
 - b) Provide examples of innovative employment and training programs and activities conducted by eligible entities or other neighborhood-based organizations as part of a community antipoverty strategy.
- A. Missouri's nineteen (19) Community Action Agencies (CAAs) provide assistance to individuals, families, and communities to reduce or eradicate poverty. CAA's act as a catalyst and gatekeeper for community coordination which bring about changes in their communities and to better the lives of the families they serve on a daily basis. CAAs address the 'whole family' through a strengths-based, family development approach to supporting individuals and families to attain self-sufficiency. This includes:
- 1. Intake, assessment and referred individuals are guided through a process to identify their areas need and development. This ensures that resources are expended in an effective and efficient manner based on the needs of client(s).
 - 2. Family support and case management services help identify the specific needs of families, such as housing, healthcare, childcare, or financial assistance, and then connect them with appropriate resources and services. Services are often tailored to the unique circumstances of each family, offering personalized support and guidance. The intent is to improve and strengthen family functioning with a focus on healthy communication, conflict resolution, and parenting skills, as well as promoting healthy family dynamics. Case Management services focus on crisis intervention and prevention for trauma events such as domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health challenges, and work to prevent future crises. This approach demands a high level of community engagement to connect families with their communities, fostering a sense of belonging and access to local resources and support networks. Whether it is an individual or a family, the objective is to set strategic goals which enhance success on the continuum toward achieving self-sufficiency.
 - 3. Life skills classes assist individuals in learning skills and behaviors which help effectively manage everyday challenges and opportunities, both personally and professionally. They encompass a wide range of competencies, including problem-solving, communication,

critical thinking, and interpersonal skills. These skills are crucial for navigating relationships, making informed decisions, and achieving success in various aspects of life.

4. Coordination and referral for services address barriers to achieving self-sufficiency, including education; transportation; housing; childcare; employment training; and other issues as the community needs assessment indicates
5. Several CAAs also have employment and training programs within their organizational structure, including WIOA Youth Employment programs, Adult/Dislocated Worker Services, career preparation, internships, on-the-job training, mentoring, HiSET, and other supportive services. CAAs collaborate in the governance of the workforce development system by serving on Workforce Development Boards (WDBS), administering employment and training programs, sharing referrals with workforce partners, co enrolling participants, and coordinating services at the local level.
6. Missouri's State CSBG office works collaboratively with other state agency partners and with Community Action Agencies to nurture and extend the existing collaborative partnerships and develop new partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of the workforce system throughout the state.

(b) The programs listed below were developed in partnership with Community Action, or are CAA programs that employ innovative or collaborative approaches to helping individuals attain self-sufficiency:

1. Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across Missouri play a vital role in delivering the SkillUP program, which helps SNAP participants gain skills, training, and support services that lead to employment and self-sufficiency. CAAs integrate SkillUP with their own resources and programs such as case management, family support, Head Start, housing, and transportation assistance, creating a whole-family approach to reducing poverty. Each agency adapts SkillUP services to community-specific needs and labor markets, ensuring programs are locally responsive and effective. They also work to remove critical barriers to success, including childcare, housing instability, and transportation, which often prevent participants from completing training or maintaining employment.
2. In addition, CAAs coordinate with workforce partners such as WIOA, National Farmworker Jobs program, and reentry programs to share resources, cover training costs, and avoid duplication of services. Many agencies also engage local employers by placing participants in work experiences that build skills, provide career exploration, and support transitions into in-demand industries. In FY25, 12 CAAs operated the SkillUP program, enrolling 365 participants, of which 245 entered training. The reported average wage after program completion was over \$20 per hour. To support parents in training or employment, many CAAs also connect children of participants to Head Start programs.
3. By combining SkillUP with CSBG-funded initiatives, CAAs provide wraparound services such as financial coaching, digital literacy training, job search assistance, and career planning. This locally driven, comprehensive approach strengthens families, reduces reliance on public assistance, and builds stronger communities across Missouri.

PRA BURDENS TABLE

Please note that the burden calculations for this table have been calculated differently depending on the referenced ICRs. The burdens included below are the same burdens that exist for these programs regardless of whether a state chooses to submit a Combined State Plan.

OMB Control Number	Topic	Estimated Total Burden	Citation for Requirement to Respond
Common Form Elements			
1205-0522	Common Requirements and Program-Specific requirements for: The Adult Program, the Dislocated Worker Program, the Youth Program, the Wagner-Peyser Act Program, the Adult Education and Literacy Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program	3,268 hours	WIOA sec. 102 and 103
Supplemental Collections for Combined Plan Partners' Program-Specific Elements			
1830-0029	Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-270) State Plan Guide	2,240 hours	Sections 122(a)(1) and 201(c) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Act), 20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq. as amended by P.L. 109-270, and WIOA sec. 103
0970-0145	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) State Plan Guidance	594 hours	42 U.S.C. 602, and WIOA sec. 103
0584-0083	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Operating Guidelines, Forms, and Waivers, Program and Budget Summary Statement	1431 hours ³⁰	7 CFR 271-274.1, and WIOA sec. 103

1225-0086	Grant Application Requirements for the Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program	1620 hours	38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c), and WIOA sec. 103.
1205-0132	Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan Planning and Reporting Guidelines	1530 hours	29 CFR 97.40 ET Handbook No. 336 18 th Edition, and WIOA sec. 103.
1205-0040	Senior Community Service Employment Program Performance Measurement System	406 hours	20 CFR Part 641, and WIOA sec. 103
0970-0382	Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Model Plan Applications	112 hours ³¹	Section 676(b) of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9908(b)), and WIOA sec. 103.

OMB Control Number 1205-0522

³⁰ This number represents estimated average burden for the portion of the SNAP plan that covers programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 only.

³¹ This number represents estimated average burden for the portion of t